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Ultimate Internet Guide

05 96

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How To Get There.

HEAD GAMES

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- **Hollywood Invades the Web:** What Does It Mean For You?
- **Cool Online Games:** Where to Find Them
- **Play Against the World:** Multi-Player Games Hit the Wires
- **Beat the System:** Game Cheats Online
- **Brains Behind the Games:** Interviews with Three Top Game Developers

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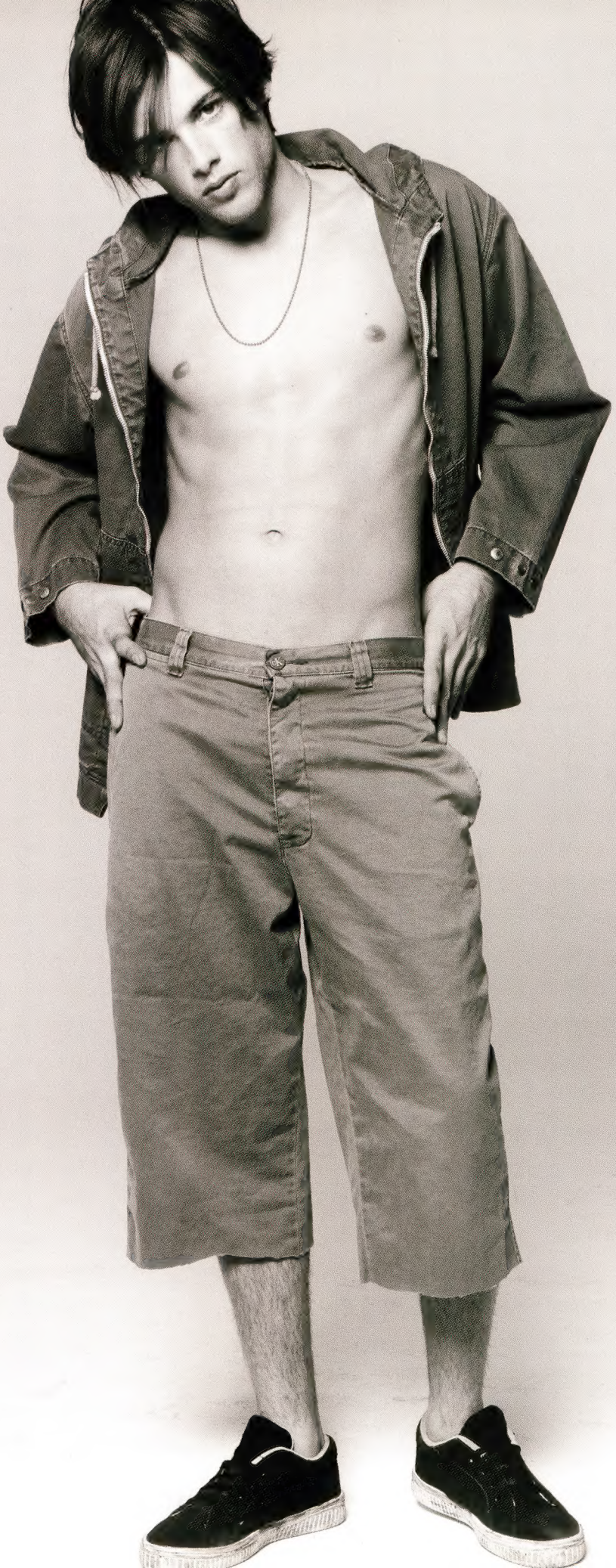

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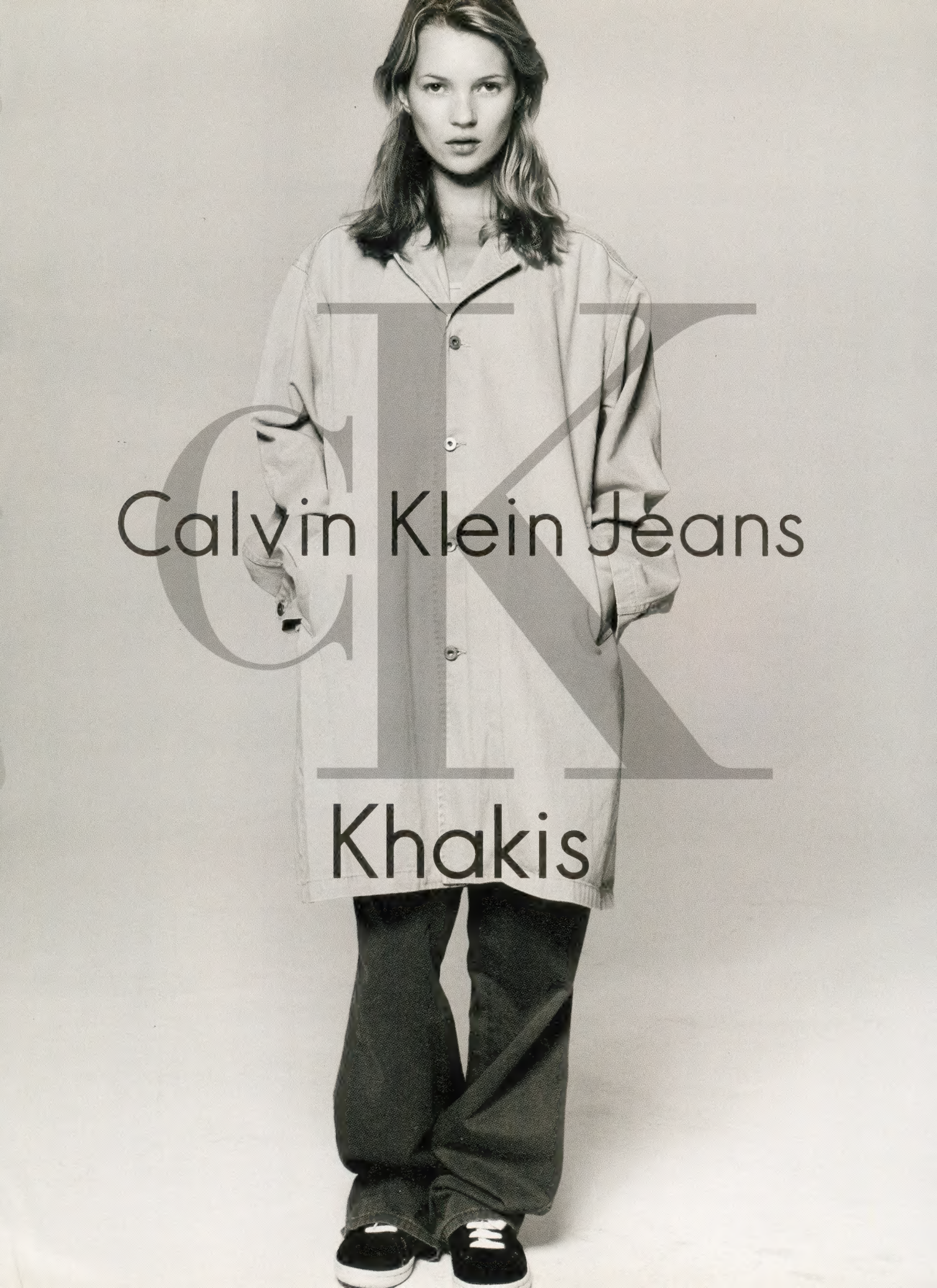
Calvin Klein Jeans
Khakis

Steven Young Esq.

(Also known to toss around the old pigskin now and again)

Proof I have a law degree. Maybe someday I'll be writing up the contracts instead of signing them.

Visa Purchases:
$500 plate dinner for the Children's Miracle Network Annual Gala
Present for Mom - $206.85
(Don't get home as often as I should.)
Doctor's bill - $150.75
Lots of plane tickets
Lots of hotel rooms
Pedals for mountain bike - $129.80

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Speeding tickets.
(My only vice.)

My prom date
(That's Miss U.S.A.® 1986.
Who would have known?)

Forty-niners key chain.
(Part of my signing bonus.)

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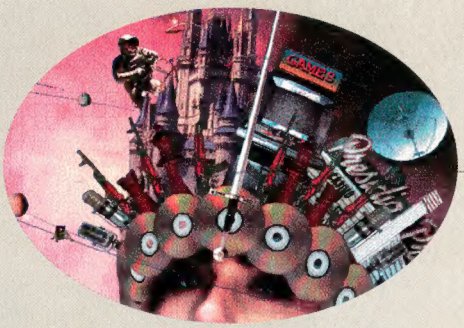
the net

May 1996 Vol. 1, No. 12

FEATURES



To Marc Andreessen, Thanks For Everything!

Michael Fisher

Tinsel Town is breaking down the Internet's door. Movie studios, TV networks, and recording companies are rushing to hammer up sites on the Web, as Armani suit-wearing, cigar-chomping execs worry that Internet use is eating into traditional leisure time activities like going to movies or watching TV. But what kind of sites are they creating? And what will happen to a populist medium when Hollywood-style entertainment moves in? Courtney Macavinta investigates these questions on pages 28-35.

Are You Ready to Play?

Whether you want to play a 3D game against thousands, or just enjoy a text-based mind game, the choices are myriad. This month, we explore:

Twitch and Shout at 28,800 BPS: Online Gaming Sparks Rivalries Between Anonymous Opponents

Online services expressly designed for multi-player gaming have emerged, and they're offering big entertainment for reasonable amounts of money. At the same time, the Big Three have improved their gaming content. Steve Poole takes us through the dizzying array of online gaming choices. Pages 38-43.

It's Play Time: *The Net*'s Gaming Sites Extravaganza

Get the lowdown on the latest and greatest game-playing sites; Web pages with cheats, tips, information, and resources; gaming magazine sites; and gaming company spots on the Web. Plus: the people behind the plays – Trent Ward interviews three top gaming developers. Pages 44-50.

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net POWER

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netPOWER

A Disc to Give You an Edge Online
May 1996

Game On, Gamer

This month, *The Net* covers online gaming, and, in the spirit of play, *netPOWER* comes to you full of fun and addictive games. You'll find puzzles, adventure, board, and card games, as well as client software for online action. Windows 95 users will want to rush to the demo of one of Lucas Arts' newest games, *Afterlife*. Just go to the "Ademo" file to check it out. There are also tons of other Windows shareware games in the "games" folder, located within the "winshare" folder. Mac users will find their toys in the "howto" folder (see page 8).

Avoid carpal tunnel syndrome and hours of frustration retyping URLs from the magazine – *netPOWER* is a convenient archival resource of the hyperlinks from *The Net*. There are more than 2,000 hyperlinks, which will provide you with hours and hours of hassle-free browsing.

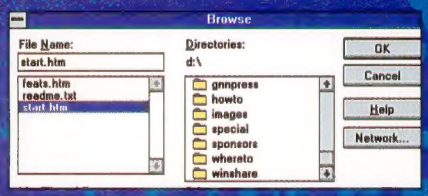
What's more, *netPOWER* will help you keep your bookmarks manageable: No more bookmarking every time you come across a great site from the magazine – just pop the disc in, and use the provided resources.

HOW TO USE THE DISC:

To get to the Sites of the Month, Sitings, Archived Resources, Hyperlinks, and Starter Kit:

Windows:

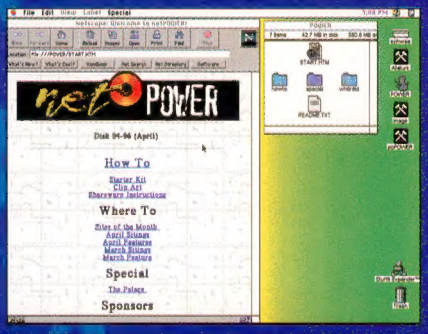
1. Put the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Open your Web browser.
3. Choose "Open local" or "Open file" from the File menu. (Note: If you are a Pipeline NY customer, you will need to use a different browser, as Pipeline's browser does not allow you to open local files.)



4. Choose "D:\START.HTM" (assuming D: is your CD drive). Be sure that the open dialog says "show.htm files" if you're using a browser from an online service.
5. If you cannot locate the START.HTM file, make sure that under "files of type" you have selected all files (*.*).

Macintosh:

1. Put the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Open your Web browser.
3. Choose "Open local" or "Open file" from the file menu.
4. Click on the desktop button, open "netPOWER," and then open "START.HTM."
5. Alternatively, you can drag the START.HTM file on top of your browser's icon to open it.



To Access all Other Files on *netPOWER:*

Windows 95:

1. Insert the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Under the "Start" button, select "Run."
3. In the "Run" window select "Browse", and look in "D" (assuming that "D" is the letter of your CD-ROM drive). Under "Files of type" select "All files (*.*)"

Windows 3.x:

1. Insert the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Go to the Program Manager window, choose "Run" and select "Browse" from your "D" drive (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Under "Files of type" select "All files (*.*)"

Macintosh:

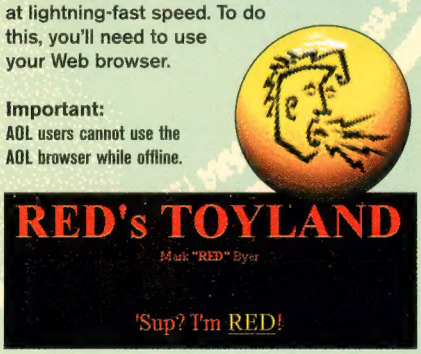
1. Insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive, and look on your desktop for the netPOWER window, which contains the folders for shareware, advertising, and clip art.

CONTENTS OF netPOWER:

Mirrored Web Sites

netPOWER takes some of the best Web sites from our Blue Pages reviews section, and mirrors parts of them on the disc. That means that we've stored locally on this CD-ROM the Web pages you would see if you were cruising the Internet. This way, you'll be able to easily access these sites offline – and at lightning-fast speed. To do this, you'll need to use your Web browser.

Important:
AOL users cannot use the AOL browser while offline.



This month's mirrored sites:

Film: The Hitchcock Page
http://www.primenet.com/~mwc/

Gaming: The Tanker's Home Page
http://www.webspace.com/~tanker/ (tank.gif)

Health: American Cancer Society
http://www.cancer.org

Media: c|net online
http://www.cnet.com
Important: To listen to the audio tour of this mirrored site, you need to use the RealAudio™ Player. Windows users can find the player in the "realaud" folder, and Macintosh users can find it in the "RealAudio" folder. Both are located within the "special" folder. Or download the player from the RealAudio site at http://www2.realaudio.com/release/download.html.

Vanity: Red's Toyland
http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~mizraith/interests.html (red.gif)

Lava Lounge and The Palace

The Lava Lounge is *The Net's* graphical chat area that you can visit and participate in at our Web site (http://www.thenet-usa.com). Sure, you can download the software yourself (http://www.thepalace.com/), or skip the hassle by installing The Palace software you need from *netPOWER* in the D:\special\palace\ directory (that's netPOWER:special:palace: for you Mac folk). Here's how to get there once you've inserted the CD into you CD-ROM drive:

WINDOWS

1. Windows 95 users go to the "Start" button and select "Run". Windows 3.x users go to the Program Manager window, choose "Run" and select "Browse" from your "D" drive (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. In the "Run" window select "Browse", and look in "D" (assuming "D" is the letter of your CD-ROM drive).
3. Open the folder called "special" within which you'll find a folder called "palace."
4. Open the palace folder and double-click on "install".

MACINTOSH

1. Open the folder called "special".
2. You'll see a folder called "palace".
3. Open the palace folder and double-click on The Palace installer.

The Palace is a graphical chat client that works over TCP/IP networks. You'll have to have a PPP connection from an Internet Service Provider to use the software. CompuServe and the Windows version of America Online can be used as a PPP connection, too. Go to keyword INTERNET on both services for more information. Check the online calendar for more details.

And finally...
On the last Tuesday of each month, Blue Grrrl and Shel Kimen hit the Web for a Grrrls Night Out. Girls of all ages (five to Grandma) are invited to visit the Lava Lounge to hang out, chat about issues and help each other find women's and girl's resources online. The show starts at 5 p.m. PST and goes until 6:30 p.m. PST. If you're really good, they might round up a few special guest stars!

Clip Art

You can access a variety of clip art — including bullets, arrows, and background tiles — from either the *netPOWER* HTML that you view with your browser, or in the "WebArt" folder. From within the HTML, if you click on an image without letting go of the mouse button, you can choose to "Save This Image." Choose a destination folder, and you will have saved your graphic. Otherwise, go to the WebArt folder for all of the graphics in one convenient location.

Important: You cannot launch shareware from the HTML pages of netPOWER. You can, however, read about the programs and (in the case of the HTML editors that are also on this disc), launch to the specific Web sites of each manufacturer. Licensing information is included with each program, and when you use it, you accept the responsibility to adhere to that license and restrictions. netPOWER claims no interest in the copyrighted programs of the individual authors. You are NOT purchasing usage rights to this software with netPOWER. To obtain usage rights, you must register with the developer identified in each program. After you check it out, we strongly urge you to register your software with the respective author.

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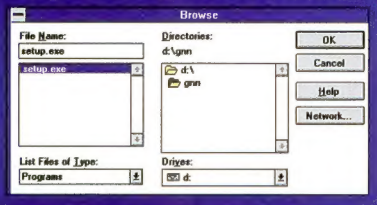

1. Insert this CD in your CD-ROM drive (D or E).
2. Select Run from the file menu of your Windowsx Program Manager, type D:\GNN\SETUP (or E:\SETUP), and click on OK to install the GNN software and register for the GNN service.
3. Then, follow the simple, step-by-step instructions on your screen, and when prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve.

Windows 95 users replace Step 2 above as follows: Click on the Start button on the Windows 95 Task Bar and select Run, type D:\GNN\SETUP (or E:\SETUP), and click on OK to install the GNN software and register for the GNN service.

EarthLink Network, Inc.

EarthLink is a full-service Internet access company specializing in providing services for individuals and business throughout North America. Visit the EarthLink Web site at http://www. earthlink.com/, and sign on today using the *netPOWER* disc. Windows users go to the "EARTHLNK" folder, and Mac users to the "EarthLink" folder.

TOTAL EarthLink Network ACCESS

Windows 95 and Windows 3.x:

1. For Windows 3.x, go to the Run window and type D:\EARTHLNK\WIN3.1\SETUP.EXE (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. For Windows 95, go to the Run window and type D:\EARTHLNK\WIN95\SETUP.EXE (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Follow the instructions to register your new EarthLink Network TotalAccess account.
4. If at any time you need help, click on the HELP button or press F1.

Macintosh:

1. Open the EarthLink folder within the netPOWER window on your desktop.
2. To sign up with EarthLink, double click on the installer icon and follow the instructions to register your new EarthLink Network TotalAccess account.
3. If at any time you need help, click on the HELP button or press F1.

WebPhone

http://www.netspeak.com/

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WebPhone™ is the professional, full featured Internet telephone from NetSpeak. WebPhone provides telephone quality, real-time, full duplex, encrypted, point-to-point voice communication over the Internet and other TCP/IP based networks. Using WebPhone, you can talk to anyone, anywhere on earth without incurring long distance charges. To experience WebPhone, run wpsetup.exe from Windows. (Sorry, Mac users!)

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From the Editor:

If there's one thing that's become clear to me as the editor of an Internet magazine, it's that the net is a medium that's both frustrating and exciting. This month, I'd like to share both those feelings with you – frustration and excitement.

I'm excited because the Internet is like time itself - fluid, changing, always in motion. It never stops evolving. That means that in the period of time since we put this magazine together, some Web sites moved to new servers, others were dismantled and shut down by their owners, and still others were put on hiatus for a rethink or their creators' vacations. Those of you who bought this magazine last week and got online to check out sites we've written about already have an advantage over those who'll buy it tomorrow.

And here's where my sense of frustration enters the picture. If the Internet is time, *The Net* magazine is a snapshot of time.

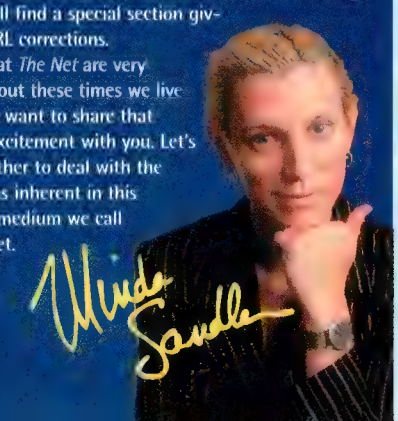
Each month, *The Net*'s editors check every URL in the magazine one final time before we pack the pages up and overnight them to our printer. That way, we figure, we catch any last-minute Web site address changes or errors. Wrong. Despite this double- and triple-checking, by the time you read this column, some of the URLs in the pages ahead and on the disc (if you bought our CD-ROM version) won't work. An address we've published may yield an error message, or direct you to a new URL, or, in some cases, take you somewhere totally unexpected. If you want to see an example of such an error, check out our corrections column on page 12.

Why buy something that's a snapshot when you have the real thing shimmering out there, beckoning to you? We still can't get beyond the fact that even if the Internet is time, time on the Internet is money, and that's not something most people care to waste. The print version of this magazine is about giving you a physical map of the Internet, and at the same time empowering you to use this medium to its fullest potential – so you can be the pilot of your cyber travels, not a mere passenger; a Web site publisher, not just a browser. Also, print has a high degree of comfort and portability that the cyber realm still doesn't hold. You can touch this magazine, hold it, fold its pages down, read it while you're on a subway or bus; in short, own it. Not all information is best presented on a scrolling window on a computer.

Still, much of the material we print is free-changing and constantly evolving.

So we've put together a new section on our Web site where you can get an update on sites whose URLs have changed. Please, after you finish this column, go there and take a look to see the changes (**http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/mutate/mutate.html**). And I'd like to extend a heartfelt invitation to you – when you try an address and it doesn't work, for whatever reason, let us know. If you found it in the Blue Pages (pages 65-96), send it to **blue@thenet-usa.com**. If it's in another part of the magazine, send a quick note to **mutate@thenet-usa.com**. In future issues of the magazine, you'll find a special section giving you URL corrections.

We at *The Net* are very excited about these times we live in, and we want to share that sense of excitement with you. Let's work together to deal with the frustrations inherent in this mercurial medium we call the Internet.



e-mail

Your Comments, Kudos, and Conversations
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Stealing My Web Page

Great article (*The Net* April 96, pages 36-39). However, if we hadn't already decided that being a "Web Presence Provider" was the most oversaturated market around, this would have pushed us over the edge. Your tutorial on Web design is so easily comprehended, it will probably lead a couple hundred more lemmings into thinking they can design Web pages for a living.

William Scheller & Randall Pickard
(http://stoogenet.com)

Big Three Aren't the Only Answer

I subscribe to only two net-based mags – *Boardwatch* and *The Net*. Armed with those, I find I have all the tools needed.

I rarely write to magazines or papers, but I did want to point out something that many newcomers to Internet services are not aware of. There are alternatives to the "Big Three" – America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy – for accessing the net. Check out the local Bulletin Board System (BBS) in your community. If you have not used a BBS since the early days of telecommunications, you will be pleasantly surprised. We have come a long way! Many of the local services can provide you excellent connections at very affordable pricing. Most will offer customer support that is very hard to beat, plus some local flavor.

Typical rates are as low as $20 a month for unlimited access. A few are free. BBSs today offer full Internet e-mail, POP3, multi-lines, teleconferences, newsgroups, chat rooms, file libraries, online games, and full Web access, along with a multitude of other services. Many offer some demo time.

Anyway, it's worth a mention. Try it, you just might find what you've been looking for. Thanks for a great magazine. The CD is super!

sysop@omoegabbs.com

To get a listing of BBSs, visit Yahoo's site at **http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Networking_and_Communications/Bulletin_Boards/Indices/.**

netFAQ Rehash

In Vol. I, Issue 11 in the netFAQ column (page 61), a reader asks about receiving Winsock-related error messages when using Eudora. The DLLs quoted (CIDRMT.DLL, CIDPPP.DLL) are part of CompuServe's NetLauncher package and may also be included with Spry packages since Spry's purchase by CompuServe.

If the writer is using the Trumpet dialer to connect with an ISP, then the cause may not be that files have been moved, but more likely that Eudora has found a Winsock in the path that requires these DLLs to operate. The solution for Trumpet users is to make sure the directory containing TCPMAN.EXE and related DLLs is in the DOS path. Any other WINSOCK.DLL files should be renamed or deleted. This general rule applies to other Winsock dialers also.

To find other WINSOCK.DLL files, use File Manager's "File | Search" to search for all WINSOCK.DLL starting in the C:\ directory. Rename any unneeded Winsocks according to the program or service associated with them. I renamed the Microsoft Winsock to WINSOCK.MS and America Online's Winsock to WINSOCK.AOL. CompuServe's Winsock became WINSOCK.CIS.

One thing is for sure. The writer's problem is Winsock-related and not Eudora-related.

Anthony E. Greene

I was reading through Todd Marshall's netFAQ column on page 61 of the April issue, and it seems like the advice given one reader may cause him quite a bit of trouble! Todd told a 286 owner that he should not upgrade his motherboard, but rather upgrade his RAM to 8 megs. Todd then told him to make sure he buys RAM, which he will then be able to use later on should he decide to upgrade to a Pentium.

First of all, most 286s use DRAM memory, which is practically impossible to come by nowadays at a reasonable price. Pentiums use 72-pin simms, so even if the 286 uses simms, they would be 30 pin, which would not fit into a Pentium! In fact, even the current 486 boards use 72-pin simms.

What I would have suggested to the reader is to upgrade his motherboard to a 486, and then purchase at least eight megs of 72-pin simms. If he looks around, he should be able to get a 486-dx4100 with eight megs for $400 or so.

Your advice would simply have him running around all over town looking for things that simply do not exist.

Zev Berkovich

Disc and Dat

Having had little luck with discs that come with magazines, I very seldom try them, but something compelled me to try this one. I was pleasantly surprised to find that it did everything you said it would on my lowly 386 33SX with no glitches. I shall look forward to using any other disks that might accompany your issues.

I have a library of computer magazines and was reluctant to purchase another, especially since most of the content is geared to Windows 95 and I have no desire to use Win 95. I was pleased with the content of your publication and shall look forward to next month's issue. I am a novice to the Internet and your magazine is going to be a big help to me.

Barbara Bell

Protecting Your Privacy

David Sobel's opinion in January's *The Net* (page 09) raises some interesting and valid questions and viewpoints. However, as a former assistant county prosecutor, I must disagree with the overall tone of the article.

If the battle were simply "services avoiding government regulations vs. individual privacy rights," I would agree that privacy rights must win every time. The problem "Innocent Images" exposed is not within that battle. Any time children are involved, the "reasonableness" standard for a law, and its normal application to consenting adults, must allow greater tolerance. Criminal law always raises two important questions: 1) Should the act be against the law; and 2) How will the law be enforced?

The question of whether law enforcement should eliminate child pornography can only be answered, in my opinion, "yes." (Protesters who shout, "We have a right to do what we want in our homes" miss the point.

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It is not the possession of sexual materials which is offensive, it is the exploitation of children to *create* the materials that is offensive). As to the "how" question, you ask, "Is it appropriate for services to invite law enforcement and allow them to misrepresent themselves?" First, I think "misrepresent" has an incorrect connotation. Citizens don't think an undercover officer "misrepresents" himself when he makes a drug buy, if it gets rid of the dealer. Second, law enforcement always calls for "reasonable" protection of individual rights, which must be expanded when children are involved.

I would hope that all users would be willing to sacrifice a little privacy to protect some unsuspecting victim. You wouldn't want a weirdo talking to your children on the street. Why would you want the same weirdo to have access to your children via your computer? Unfortunately, along with the unique and wonderful benefits of the net and online services, a greater danger for children has developed. Thus, there's a need for more protection. Please keep up the cry for freedom from intrusion, but temper it with reason.

Greg Curtis

David Sobel responds: I'm glad to see that my column did, in fact, raise some provocative questions. I agree with your implicit observation that there is no clear-cut answer when it comes to difficult issues such as child pornography on the Internet. I do, however, believe that law enforcement authorities overstep their bounds when they go "undercover" in the online environment. Unlike drug investigations, in this context we're talking about a communications medium that enjoys First Amendment protection. For that reason, I think police agencies need to be far more cautious when they conduct investigations of online activity.

The letters printed in the March issue of *The Net* included several from readers who expressed concerns about the privacy of their e-mail. It is probably best to assume that no conventional e-mail is private. E-mail is about as secure as are messages written and sent on a postcard via conventional mail. While a number of solutions for this problem exist, I suggest that users seriously concerned about the privacy of their messages consider encrypting those messages. PGP (Pretty Good Privacy), despite a few weaknesses recently reported, is, in my view, perfectly adequate to secure most communications. It is readily available, easy to use – and I wouldn't be without it.

Thomas R. W. Longstaff

Note: You can find out more about Pretty Good Privacy, including where to go to get it, at ***http://www.mantis.co.uk/pgp/pgp.html****.*

The Truly Bizarre

Just when I thought I was tired of hearing of the Gangsta-thing, somebody reminds us who the real "Capo di Tutti Capi" is. I checked out Ravenna's Tribute to John Gotti after reading the humorous piece in episode 10 of your mag (*The Net* March 96, page 61). I've read these other net mags and they don't give me what I want. I want *bizarre*, so give me more!

MagpieFive

Searching the Net

On page 31 of the March Issue, I found a list of "popular search engines." Type **http://www.altavista.digital. com**. You'll never want another. Twenty million home pages (full text) are already in storage and Digital is after the remaining 16 to 20 million out there.

Roy Nilson

Internet Explorer Update

In your "Browser Bonanza" (March 96, page 29), you say that the Microsoft Internet Explorer "works only under Windows 95." Well, Microsoft now has Internet Explorer in beta versions for Windows 3.1 and the Mac system. Not to mention that you didn't give credit in the little article that Internet Explorer that it supports HTML 2.0, in-line video, and in-line sound. Plus, Microsoft has VRML for the Internet Explorer beta 2.0.

David Benigni

Homer Review Follow-up

Thank you for printing my e-mail commenting on my experiences with Homer in the March issue of *The Net* (page 10). Since I wrote that, I have been on a quest for a better Macintosh IRC (Internet Relay Chat) client, and I have found one. Ircle is the way to go. Though it's still not perfect, and it falls short of the PC standard IRC client, mIRC, it runs roughshod all over Homer in its new 2.3 beta incarnations. Also, ircle has a Web site where users can download it, and updates, at **http://www.xs4all.nl/~ircle**. Ircle is the one!!!

William W. Bennett

Paradigm Shift Keeps Shifting

I liked Shel Kimen's article in *The Net* about Microsoft ("Paradigm Shift at Microsoft," March 96, page 12). Except for the sarcasm. Maybe it was just me, but she came across as another Microsoft hater. Personally, I think that Microsoft's great! *Somebody's* gotta take the initiative, and who's got more money to sink into the development of the net than Microsoft? I definitely think that the future is gonna have the PC replacing the TV. But that can't happen unless someone invests time and money.

Chad
(**http://www.cei.net/~ctbugs/home.htm**)

Shel Kimen responds: Yes, I am sarcastic when it comes to Microsoft, but contrary to your suggestions, the reason I am so harsh has more to do with the company's business practices than its products. A perfect example is Microsoft's Active VRML. People have been developing VRML environments now for over a year, using the specifications of the VRML working group. Microsoft, in an attempt to stake a claim on the standard, invented its own VRML, which, while it functioned, was not so drastically different from the existing standard. Microsoft originally proposed that its Active VRML be part of the VRML 3D standard. When the VRML Working group did not accept the proposal as part of the VRML 2.0 Specification, Microsoft went ahead anyway with its strategy, made some changes, and is still planning on using its own VRML technology. The Internet is built upon open standards, not strong-arm tactics to make standards compliant with Miorosoft products. It's this sort of business practice that makes me take issue with Microsoft. I'm not saying the company shouldn't invest in the net. Quite the contrary, I think it should. I just think it better catch the wave of open standards, which are free and accessible and a much better approach. Otherwise, it will lose out on some wonderful technology.

ERRATA:

Online Service Rates

Thank you to all who wrote us correcting the inaccuracies in the price chart of online service rates in our March 96 issue. Here are the right numbers:

	AOL	CIS Std	CIS SV	Prodigy Basic	Prodigy 30/30	MSN SMP	MSN FU
5 hrs:	$9.95	$9.95	$24.95	$9.95	$29.95	$9.95	$19.95
10 hrs:	$24.70	$24.70	$24.95	$24.70	$29.95	$22.45	$19.95
20 hrs:	$54.20	$54.20	$24.95	$54.20	$29.95	$47.45	$19.95
30 hrs:	$83.70	$83.70	$44.45	$83.70	$29.95	$72.45	$39.95

please note:

- **AOL (America Online) charges $9.95 as a monthly fee, gives you five free hours a month, and charges $2.95 for each hour thereafter**
- **CompuServe's (CIS) Standard plan charges $9.95 as a monthly fee, gives you 5 free hours a month, and charges $2.95 for each hour thereafter**
- **CIS' Super Value plan charges $24.95 as a monthly fee, gives you 20 free hours a month, and charges $1.95 for each hour thereafter**
- **Prodigy Basic charges $9.95 as a monthly fee, gives you 5 free hours a month, and charges $2.95 for each hour thereafter.**
- **Prodigy 30/30 charges $29.95 as a monthly fee, gives you 30 free hours a month, and charges $2.95 per hour thereafter.**
- **Microsoft Network (MSN) Standard Monthly Plan (SMP) charges $4.95 a month, gives you three free hours a month, and charges $2.50 per hour thereafter.**
- **MSN Frequent User (FU) charges $19.95 a month, gives you 20 free hours a month, and charges $2.00 per hour thereafter.**

Red in the Face

We got it wrong when we described a service called Your Own Web Page in our April issue (page 52). First of all, the site is not affiliated with Sirius Connections (http://www.sirius.com/), a San Francisco-based Internet Service Provider; Sirius is merely the host of the site. Second, the site we discussed has moved to http://www. sirius.com/~bluracer.

We'd also like to we'd like to invite you to check out several other sites that offer help with getting a Web page up on the Web:

- **A Home for Your Web Page (http://www.ahome.com/) Offers Web space rental for a price (ranging from $14.95 a month to $49.95 a month).**
- **Automatic Home Page Generator (http://ugweb.cs.ualberta.ca/~ritter/cgi-bin/hpg.html) Generate your own home page by filling out the fields provided below and then clicking the "submit" button.**
- **Build Your Own Personal Home Page (http://kenionet.com/hpp/auto.html) A free service that lets you fill in a form that will generate a home page in HTML.**
- **Hayi Home Page Generator (http://www.lafayette.edu/acs/hayi/html-form1.html) Generate your own page without knowing a lick of HTML.**
- **Kids Universe (http://www.tisoft.com/arbitron) Designed to let kids build their own home page, for free.**
- **Lily's Web Toolbox (http://www.tripod.com/~lirani/webbie.htm) This is pretty cool!**
- **Make a Web Page (http://wwwmugc.cc.monash.edu.au/~acope/h/makeapage.html) This is pretty cool, too!**
- **The Page Generator (http://www.cs.uoregon.edu/~jolson/generator/) A great site for getting a page up there on the Web.**
- **Web-o-Matic! (http://www.directnet.com/web-o-matic/) Helps you create a free temporary home page; to maintain it, you need to pay $12 a month.**
- **Yet Another How To Create Your Own Home Page Home Page (http://www.intergalact.com/hp/hp.html) A step-by-step tutorial.**

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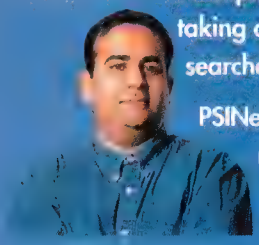

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'24 Hours': A Technological Wonder, But Was It Journalism?

cyber vorsy

Mission Control was thick with nervous energy and perspiration. On one wall, the projected image of an analog clock ticked away as a deadline reminder. Against another wall sat a basket full of deodorant sticks for the people who couldn't find time to take a shower, or convince a friend to drop by with a change of clothes. But, ultimately, the hard work was worth its price. As in the final scenes of *Close Encounter of the Third Kind*, the cynics became reacquainted with their own innocence. The room frequently erupted with rounds of clapping as new sets of photos appeared onscreen.

By all accounts, February's "24 Hours In Cyberspace" event set a new standard for instant Web publishing. Sure, the images illustrating the human side of cyberspace were remarkable, but no one expected the technology to work so well. Between midnight Feb. 8 and midnight Feb. 9, more than 1,250 photos from worldwide locales reached Mission Control in San Francisco.

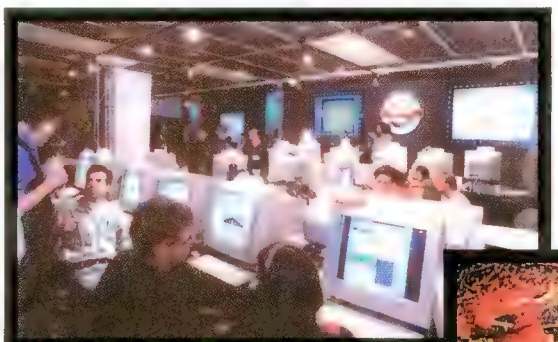
The man who conceived the event, Rick Smolan, creator of the "Day in the Life" photography series, says he expected to receive the work of only 30 to 40 photographers. Instead, more than 140 professional photographers and photojournalists met the one-day deadline. "In fact, it created a problem because we didn't expect to get so much," Smolan says. "We never thought so many people would actually figure it out." Most of the event's participants were using unfamiliar technology. Photographers were equipped with Kodak DC50 digital cameras with removable PCMCIA cards. After "filling" the cards with images, the photographers popped them into portable laptops, and then modemed the images to Mission Control. Once the shots arrived, a team of 80 editors, designers, and programmers used software custom-designed by Illustra **(http://www.illustra.com)**, NetObjects **(http://www.netobjects.com)** and Clement Mok **(http://www.cmdesigns.com)** to immediately post the content on the Web.

A student from the Nelson Mandela Township carries a donated computer.

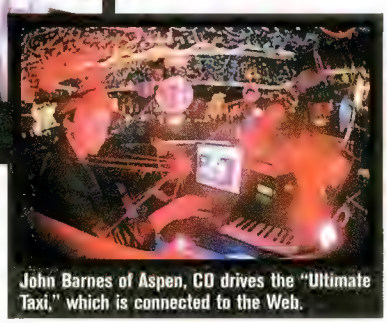
Religion and computing are integral to Israeli lifestyles.

Smolan says during the 24-hour period, the Web site (**http://www.cyber24.com/**) received more than 5 million hits. "As we were posting pages, we were getting e-mail back from people within seconds. It was eerie, and very satisfying," he says.

Assignment Editor Dogen Hannah, who's reported for publications as diverse as *Newsweek* and the *Stockton Record*, says, "It was the most intense experience I've ever been in. It was a newsroom on deadline every half-hour."



"24 Hours" creator Rick Smolan (far left) talks with Dogen Hannah 11 hours into the one-day event.



John Barnes of Aspen, CO drives the "Ultimate Taxi," which is connected to the Web.

But not all participants likened the event to news gathering. John Burks, a San Francisco State University journalism instructor, was asked to conduct phone interviews with photographers in the field. Portions of his interviews were posted as audio files to complement the photographers' photos. Burks says audio that delved into breaking news was discarded. "My general feeling is that this wasn't journalism as much as a series of interesting photo ops," he says. "There's nothing wrong with this except for the illusion it creates. It feels like a spontaneous event, but many of the stories were set up weeks in advance."

Burks ascribes the problem to the high cost of technology. He says his vision of what "24 Hours" should have been is currently cost-prohibitive. "It would be fantastic to have an ongoing news organization where you had photographers and interviewers out there, and they're really covering what comes down, not following some pre-set plan," he says. "What I saw there is potential, but very expensive."

Michael Rogers, managing editor of *Newsweek Interactive*, was a senior editor of "24 Hours." He agrees with Burks' appraisal of the event if "one defines journalism as breaking news." Says Rogers, "His criticism is true to some extent due to the technical demands of simply getting a page up. You have to be very confident with your tools in order to improvise." However, Rogers says the online model explored by "24 Hours" sets the tone for a brighter future. Through the power of the Web, he says, journalists will be able to lead consumers through narrative news stories that are supported by concrete research documentation like full interview transcripts and government reports.

"In the long-run," he says, "It could make journalism more trustworthy." *–JP*

AT&T Offers Free Internet Service

power moves

Leveraging the collective oomph of more than 90 million customers, AT&T has launched WorldNet, an Internet service that starts at a very reasonable price – absolutely free.

"Now every one of our consumer and business long-distance customers has an easy way to try the Internet," says Tom Evslin, vice president of WorldNet. "AT&T WorldNet Service is the Internet the way you'd expect it from AT&T – safe, fun and easy to use." WorldNet will offer 24-hour technical support, and a pre-configured, "AT&T-branded" version of Netscape Navigator. While your first five hours each month are free, you'll pay $2.50 for each additional hour. Unlimited monthly access costs $19.95 a month. Currently, the service only serves PC owners; Mac-heads will have to wait until winter 1996. For more information, call 1 800 WORLDNET, or check out AT&T's Web page (**http://www.att.com/worldnet**).

Not to be bullied by AT&T, and to remain competitive with existing Internet Service Providers, all three of the original Big Three online services – America Online (**http://www.aol.com**), CompuServe (**http://www.compuserve.com**), and Prodigy (**http://www.prodigy.com**) – are now offering Internet-only subscriptions. These packages allow you to enjoy the Internet, its World Wide Web, and amenities such as Usenet newsgroups and File Transfer Protocol, but you can't enter proprietary content areas owned and operated by a particular service.

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NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR PLUG-IN OF THE MONTH

If you watch enough cheesy action movies, you'll inevitably run into the following scene: A group of spies are looking at a satellite photo of an enemy bunker. The boss tells a henchman to zoom in on a specific detail. The henchman zooms in on a text, and the photo doesn't suffer any degradation. The spies focus further and further until they discover a human face – and the zoom-ins continue to look as sharp as the original photo. Now cinema fantasy has become Internet reality. Using the Fractal Viewer plug-in, you can zoom in on Fractal Image Format graphics (FIFs) without losing significant image quality. Eschewing pixels, fractal-based images are smaller than JPEGs and GIFs, and perhaps spell the future of online graphics. Fractal Viewer supports Windows 3.1 and 95, and Mac. Visit the Web site above for the plug-in and sample images.

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Chris Casey

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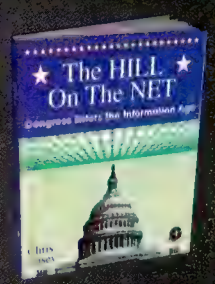

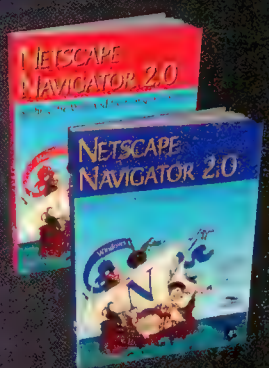

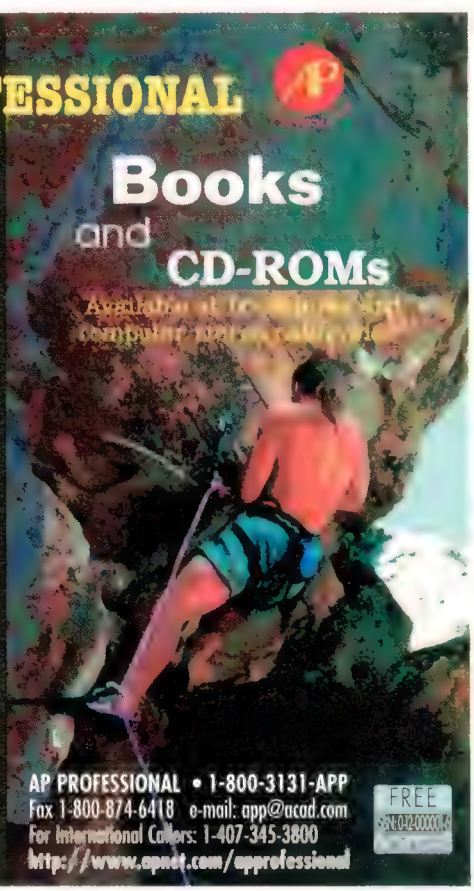
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Bizarre Usenet Phenomena

report filed by Tjames Madison, proprietor of alt.usenet.tjames

Jennifer Aniston Cult Dances With Danger

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Bill Gates Assailed as Despotic Overlord

[illegible]

cyber porn

Penthouse Profits From the Decency Act

When the Feds ban a vice, the vice becomes more valuable. It happened during Prohibition, and now it's happening to erotica: Penthouse Online enjoyed a sharp increase in paid subscriptions

following the passage of the Communications Decency Act (CDA), a portion of February's Telecom bill that prohibits "indecent" material on the Internet.

Prior to the Act's passage, the Penthouse site **(http://www.penthousemag.com/)** offered free erotic content via the Penthouse Internet Edition, an area accessible to anyone with a Web browser. Following the Act's passage, Penthouse Online cropped its free photos. Images of full nudity were replaced by portrait shots of models' faces, and shots of models fully clothed. The following link was also posted: "Want to see more? More, bigger, hotter JPEGs available in The Private Collection!"

Penthouse's move spurred an increase in subscriptions for The Private Collection, an area that includes graphic sexual imagery, and costs as much as $14.95 a month. Anthony Guccione, president of Penthouse New Media, says during the two weeks following the passage of the CDA, The Private Collection experienced a "significant increase" in subscriptions of 30 to 40 percent.

Guccione says Penthouse Online voluntarily complied with the spirit of the CDA. Nevertheless, the provisions of the CDA were not being enforced by the Justice Department in the weeks following the Act's passage. Guccione says the new law is "insidiously dangerous censorship," adding Penthouse is working with members of the Citizens Internet Empowerment Coalition to challenge the Act. The coalition also includes large mainstream companies such as America Online and Microsoft.

Even if the CDA was in fact being enforced, it's debatable whether the imagery in Penthouse Online's free area would have actually violated the law. David Sobel, legal counsel to the Electronic Privacy Information Center, says that "given the vagueness of 'indecent' and 'patently offensive,' no one can really say with any certainty what material would be in violation to the law."

Guccione says he doesn't think the Penthouse Private Collection will ever be challenged for removal because "subscription bars have already been proven adequate by the courts in the cable television industry." *–WKC*

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 required that we remove this image. To see the pictures the way you would in a free society, please go to the Private Collection.

This notice appeared in the stead of naughty images.

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Bogosian Rants Faster Than His Site Loads

inter face

Many celebrities have an online presence, but few play active roles in the creation of their own Web pages. Eric Bogosian bucks the trend. The author/theater performer/movie actor wrote and starred in the psychological thriller *Talk Radio*, and played Steven Segal's foil in *Under Siege 2*. Now he works on his Web site (**http://www.users.interport.net/~ararat/index.html**) while his screenplay *subUrbia* is filming in Austin, TX under the direction of Richard Linklater (*Slackers, Dazed and Confused*). Bogosian does not mince words when speaking with the press:

Net: *Describe your favorite Web sites.*

EB: I don't have any favorite Web sites. I find that the ones I visit have very little depth, or in the case of children's interactive sites – for my kids – the site takes forever to download, and then the drivers disappear into my computer, and the whole thing is a big pain in the ass. I think corporate executives who are so excited by these sites for their companies should try calling one up some time, and dig how frustrating the exercise is.

Net: *Describe your most interesting e-mail from Internet strangers.*

EB: I get feedback from people about a show that might have happened just the night before. Unlike moronic reviewers and critics, these people actually feel involved in the work, so they want to make comments to make the work better.

Net: *Your most frightening e-mail from an Internet stranger?*

EB: Recently I got an e-mail from some pin-head who hated a written piece I had posted, and decided that the best way to respond was to wish horrible threats on me and my family. Although I quickly answered with a likewise obnoxious e-mail, his communication made me think. When I perform in a theater or write a book, the audience has to make an effort to come to me, pay a little money, whatever. The Internet is different. It's free and it's going to a lot of people I don't know, or who may not understand what I'm about... As a result, I edit my page slightly, keeping the really nasty stuff off. You can always check out one of my books or one of my performances if you want the real thing.

Net: *What is your reaction to the Communications Decency Act? Does being a parent of two children have an effect on your opinion?*

EB: I am a proponent of complete and total freedom of speech. Anything less than that is un-American. If I don't want my kids to see this stuff, I don't let them have access to it, just as I don't let them go into triple-X video porn stores.

Net: *Should the government subsidize Internet access for all?*

EB: It would be really nice if the Internet could just stay the way it is. Every time the government gets involved, there are problems. Censorship will surely follow government subsidizing. Neo-nazi groups and pornographers only pose a problem in a world where people are unhappy economically and sexually. Complete freedom, leaving each cybernaut to decide how he or she wants to post, is the only rational solution to the future.

security check

First Virtual Reveals Holes in Competing Services

To demonstrate the security risks presented by sending credit card information over the Internet, First Virtual, a service that facilitates online money transactions, has developed a program that intercepts credit card numbers transmitted by competing services, including CyberCash's Electronic Wallet and Netscape's Secure Server.

Nathaniel Borenstein, chief scientist for First Virtual, says that this very small program (which was still without a name at press time) can be surreptitiously loaded into any computer. The program intercepts keystrokes before they can be encrypted by encryption software, and then analyzes the strokes to identify potential credit card numbers, which occur in easily recognizable patterns. Borenstein says in most operating systems, no measures are taken to hide keystrokes, which may be the weakest links in computer security.

First Virtual (http://www.fv.com/) is trumpeting its nifty program (which plays the theme from "Dragnet" whenever it finds a credit card number) because its particular online commerce system doesn't require that you type credit card numbers into your computer.

The program sounds dangerous because it is. First Virtual has already shared its alarming investigative efforts with credit card companies, the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and various government agencies, and has promised not to copy or distribute the program itself.

CyberCash (http://www.cybercash.com) counters accusations that its system is insecure by noting that it only requires a credit card number to be entered once, after which it is saved in a secure area. The chances are minimal that an interceptor program like First Virtual's would be running at the same time a consumer is entering his or her credit card number, CyberCash says, adding that its system is less risky than reading numbers over the phone.

Computer security experts and hackers are already using Internet newsgroups to discuss methods that would circumvent First Virtual's program. The most popular scheme is a graphical interface in which users click on numbers with a mouse, superseding the use of interceptable keystrokes. –*WKC*

AOL Names You *Can't* Have

control testing

The following America Online screen names have already been claimed by existing members. AOL names must begin with a capital letter, are limited to 10 character spaces, and cannot include punctuation.

God, Bill Gates, ILikeEggs, Burnout, BadBreath, TAFKAP (The Artist Formerly Known As Prince), Mommas Boy, FerretFace, Frog Mouth, No1LikesMe, ImNotANmbr, ImAFreeMan

TV themes are always popular:
Ward, June, Wally, The Beaver, L Mondello, E Haskel

As are running conversations:
I Like You, IReally Do, Trust Me, OK Fine, BeThatWay

And the Jerky Boys:
FrankRizzo, SolRsnberg, Brett Weir

Of course, every weird name hasn't already been taken by an AOL member. If you act now, you might be able to claim ILikeEbola, Gimme Room, and SNL Reject.

hard line

Turning Your Computer Into an ATM

If you could buy everything you wanted with an ATM card, you'd never need to carry cash. Unfortunately, many consumer items are too inexpensive to justify the use of plastic. This problem has been overcome in Europe through the use of "smart cards." These credit card-sized devices store digital cash in computer memory, and are used to pay for parking meters, pay phones, toll booths, and so on.

Smart cards have traditionally appeared in two forms. One type of card contains a fixed amount of money; you use the card until its funds are depleted. The other type of card is reloadable, and can be "filled" at an ATM.

Now, SCM Microsystems is selling SwapSmart, a smart card reader/writer that plugs directly into a computer's Type II PCMCIA slot. Products like SwapSmart increase the feasibility of (one day eliminating paper money. We'll simply access our bank accounts from the comfort of our homes, "fill up" our smart cards with a day's worth of spending money, and then insert our cards into futuristic cash registers whenever we feel the urge to spend. Of course, for smart cards to be useful, much of the world's business infrastructure will have to be modified. But that's their problem.

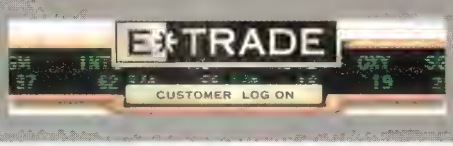
SwapSmart retails for $199. SCM Microsystems can be reached at 408-235-[illegible]. –WKC

money line

Who Needs Brokers When You Can Trade Online?

If you're hankering to parlay your Washingtons and Lincolns into Harrisons and Jacksons, point your browser to E*Trade Securities. Since 1992, the service has offered affordable online stock and option trading for mom-and-pop investors. Once available only on America Online and CompuServe, E*Trade launched a Web presence (http://www.etrade.com) this February. E*Trade currently charges the lowest commission among online securities services – $14.95 per trade for New York and American Stock Exchange options, and $19.95 for trades on NASDAQ. In comparison, Schwab's electronic service, e.Schwab (800-[illegible]), charges commissions starting at $39, while Fidelity On-Line Express (http://www.fid-inv.com) charges a minimum of $[illegible].00 per trade.

You can open an E*Trade account with $1,000. The service will provide a time-stamped audit trail of all your orders, as well as electronic trade confirmations and detailed statements summarizing your brokerage activity. Your uninvested cash will earn daily interest in one of E*Trade's money market funds. –WKC

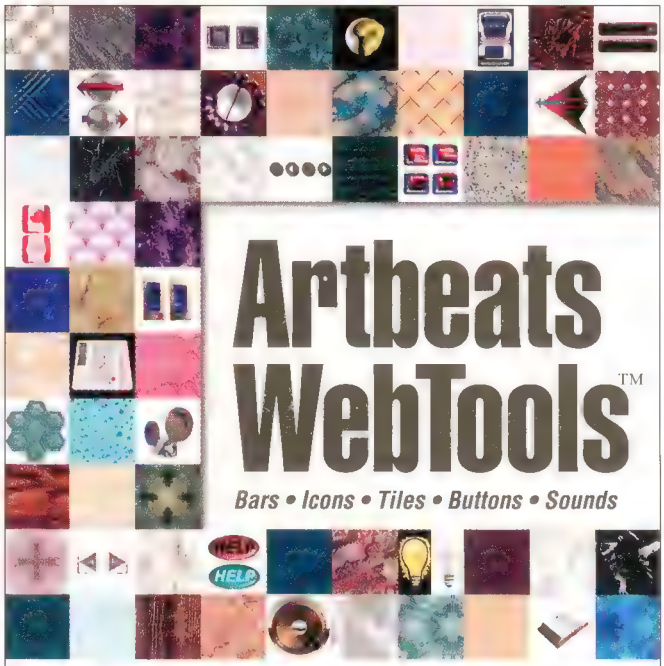


Hey, Al and Newt: Are Your Modems Unplugged, Or What?

O.K., fellas. It's now or never. Respond this month, or we'll consider your little experiments in democracy to be nice ideas that never quite jelled. Late last year, the Rand Corporation released a proposal encouraging legislators to install universal e-mail access across America. Two months ago, *The Net* decided to test the proposal's basic premise – that Internet connectivity fosters democracy – and e-mailed tech gurus Al Gore **(http://www.whitehouse.gov)** and Newt Gingrich **(georgia6@hr.house.gov)**. We asked them to comment on the proposal's merit, and challenged them to answer first and in person (*The Net*, March 1996, page 13)

To date, *The Net* has received no responses. Nada. Zilch.

C'mon, guys. Time is slip, slip, slipin. One more month. One more month. One more month…



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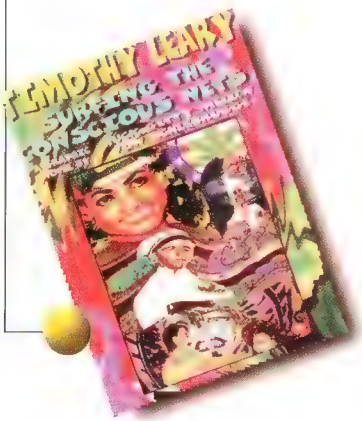
Surfing The Conscious Nets: Book 1, My Lonely Quest for the Reliable Male Aphrodisiac

Timothy Leary,
Last Gap, 800 848 4272
ISBN 0-86719-410-3, $16.95



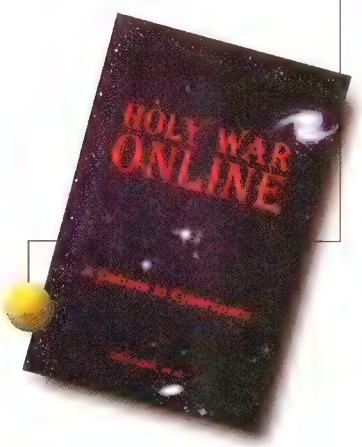
The emperor's wearing new clothes. Timothy Leary, always in the dead center of current trends, dons a new wardrobe and enters the world of cyberfiction. In *My Lonely Quest for the Reliable Male Aphrodisiac*, Leary explores life online – and pushes literary limits as he's pushed social limits for the last 30 years. Leary ignites fires with his usual rebel-rousing sexual banter; he's sure to offend some and entertain others.

The setting, the Conscious Nets BBS, is one in which various famous people (Susan Sarandon, Richard Alpert, and Ron Turner, to name a few) interact with each other, and demonstrate their hipness through extreme comments and "deep" dialogue. Unfortunately, it may be difficult for readers to actually identify with much of the text, as it is a contrived feedback loop of inside jokes, gratuitous name-dropping, and half-finished stories. Its construction (or deconstruction) is merely fragments of a whole, which is fine for participants, but difficult for those of us who don't know where it started or where it's going. Could this be a deep metaphor for the evolution of fractured language via e-mail? Possibly, but I'll save that area for Derrida. The layout boldly attempts some sort of tripped-out, *Wired*-style hoe-down, and like *Wired,* is difficult (at best) to read. This is a good example of an innovative technique that falls a bit short.

–BG

Holy War Online: A Debate in Cyberspace

David Zolt, et al.,
MMI Publishing, 707 964 9520
ISBN 0-9648968-1-8, $14.95 U.S.



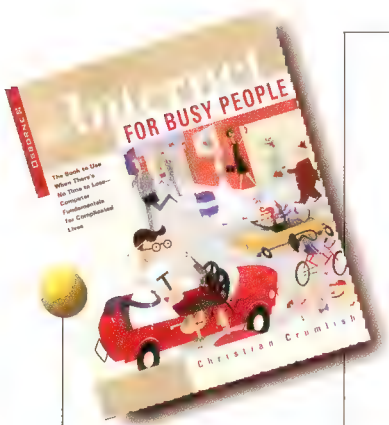
Anybody who has followed and participated in a public discussion on the Internet, or other electronic system, will immediately "get" this book. *Holy War Online* is one long thread – a posted or public message including all of its replies, and the replies to the replies. The discussion, which took place on America Online, starts out with an innocent request for information about a book, and quickly turns into a discussion of the historical Jesus.

The people participating in the discussion are the regular newsgroup zealots – serious, knowledgeable, would-be scholars, witty jokesters, etc. The first two-thirds of the book are scattered, with a lot of different subject lines coming off the original posting. Eventually, the debate settles into a one-on-one argument between David Zolt, the guy who put this book together, and Helen Ben Shahar. Another title for this book might be *How I Won an Argument in Cyberspace*, because it ends with Helen Ben Shahar, tired of the debate, refusing to post anymore to this thread – after which David Zolt declares his victory. And any experienced Internetter knows the hollowness of a smug Usenet debate victory. Of course, the author doesn't present the book as his own scholarly treatise on theology, nor does he focus on the nature of the content. While there are many interesting facts that come through in this dialogue, Mr. Zolt highlights form. By collecting these postings, he purports to be providing the experience of cyberspace without requiring the reader to ever touch a computer. The book only makes it halfway there, though, since the reader can't reply to the messages in the book, which is a large part of a cyberspace discussion.

–WKC

The Internet For Busy People

Christian Crumlish
Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 800 822 8158
ISBN 0-07-882108-8, $22.95



While the series of *For Dummies* books has been quite popular, my self-esteem began to drop as I lugged the tomes around town. *The Internet For Busy People*, on the other hand, gave me a whole new persona. Carrying this book, I could practice mannerisms such as frequently checking my watch, and writing appointments into a DayRunner as I walked down the street.

The book employs rapid-fire, concise explanations to get people up and running quickly. There is little explanation of "why" – the concentration is on "how." The first couple of chapters describe how to use the Web and configure your browser. Putting the Web chapters first was obviously a marketing ploy to exploit its current glamour. It really would have made more sense to start off with e-mail, because that is really the core of most people's Internet use. The end of the book includes quick instructions for basic Web page design. All the resources were covered, and I thought it was appropriate that FTP, Telnet, and Gopher were clustered into one chapter, since most new users – especially business types – are not likely to use these. The margins are littered with big, clumsy graphics that denote definitions, shortcuts, etc. These would be helpful if there weren't so many of them. The slant is heavily toward Microsoft software and Windows 95, although a reasonable amount of explanation is given about Netscape Navigator. This fits well with the "busy people" focus because a busy person shouldn't have time to mess with obscure programs.

–WKC

The Ideal Cost of Ignorance

Stevan Alburty

I find it takes up far too much time and mental energy to come up with my own brilliant ideas. And why bother, when it's so easy to merely appropriate those of others? Here's a fine one I have incorporated into my philosophy as genially as if I'd thought of it myself:

A former colleague of mine, Ted Colgate, has a theory he calls "The Ideal Cost of Ignorance." It states that there is a finite amount of effort we are willing to exert while shopping before settling on a given purchase. We are happy, for example, to walk *x* number of hours in a mall, visiting *x* number of stores. Or we are amenable to placing *x* number of phone calls to *x* number of merchants. Beyond that threshold, we are content to remain ignorant of the additional information and choices which might have been ours. Yes, we know that if we'd checked just one more place, we might have found an even lower price, but we have reached our threshold, we have found our Ideal Cost of Ignorance.

If I were willing to spend more time shopping, I could, for example, have a closet full of clothing which would surely make me look like Brad Pitt. But I'm a busy man. I have a low Ideal Cost of Ignorance. All of the clothes I buy are hastily grabbed from racks without much inspection, which is why everything I own has a tendency to make me look like a Brady Bunch child to whom growing up has not been kind.

And yes, I could probably save a few pennies on my favorite wine by walking three more blocks to the discount chain instead of weaving and stumbling into my corner bodega, but hey — what do an extra few cents matter when you're buying it by the gallon?

The growth of electronic commerce on the Internet may ultimately have its greatest impact in lowering each of our individual Ideal Costs of Ignorance. With just a few well-placed clicks of a mouse, I can visit more stores in an hour than Tammy Faye Bakker can in a month. Yet we still visit individual "stores" or Web sites. Each merchant on the Internet constructs his or her own virtual real estate, and the merchandise it contains is meant to be considered item by item in its own individual context.

An emerging new technology may break down those artificial electrical barriers, letting loose a tool which may be as powerful to consumers as it is shattering to the traditional rules of retailing.

Web sites like Bargainfinder act as "agents" that go out and find the cheapest merchandise in less than the amount of time it will take you to read a paragraph of my column.

Bargainfinder **(http://bf.cstar.ac. com/bf/)** is an experimental Web site from the Center for Strategic Technology Research, a division of Anderson Consulting. Using music on compact disc as its metaphor, Bargainfinder lets a user type in the title and artist of a desired CD. Its software "agents" then go off and search a variety of music stores on the Internet, reporting back on availability and pricing. In the time it took to read this paragraph, Bargainfinder can shop nine electronic stores without your even having to lift a mouse.

When Bargainfinder was launched last year, some of the stores it targeted reacted with all of the hospitality of Trojans with a second horse outside the door. Some of them blocked Bargainfinders' "agents" — partly because the searches overloaded their systems, partly from fear that Bargainfinder would display their prices in a less-than-flattering comparison.

Dr. Bruce Krulwich, Research Scientist at the Center for Strategic Technology Research, says: "Some music stores on the Internet make a decision they're going to provide the absolute best CD store on the Internet — better reviews, better mechanisms for search, wider inventories — and they're going to charge a dollar or two more per CD because providing good service costs them more money. That's standard retail practice. Something like Bargainfinder calls that whole practice into question. It's no longer the case that they can translate a point of interest that they give somebody from their reviews and their ratings and their recommendations into a point of sale."

Not so, says Jason Olim, president of CDnow **(http://cdnow.com)**, one of the stores Bargainfinder shops — or used to, before CDnow blocked its searches.

"Everyone seems to have this post-holocaust vision of retailing over the Internet," he complains.

"They think there's going to be an agent that's going to go out and find the cheapest guy, and it's going to ruin the concept of retailing as a trust-building, loyalty-inducing, value-adding exercise." Olim says his customers rely on CDnow for its selection, convenience, and information.

"Retailing has never been about the lowest-priced product," Olim insists. "It's about the right product at the right place."

Nineteenth century economist Alfred Marshall first articulated the theory of "elasticity," in which demand waxes or wanes due to changes in price. We may soon find out if the Internet is indeed a marketplace as elastic as it is electric.

Stevan Alburty (alburty@panix.com) is a technology consultant and former MIS director of Chiat/Day Advertising.

Exon is a Four-Letter Word

Carla Sinclair

Shit. I've never used this word in a magazine article before, but I cherish my First Amendment right to do so. Visit any newsstand or magazine kiosk, and you'll find every expletive imaginable (as well as "indecent" graphics) nuzzled in the pages of both mainstream and underground media. To arrest me for what I've just written would be absolutely execrable and ludicrous to any level-headed human being. It would also defy the Constitution.

But, apparently, the Internet is above Constitutional precedence. Of course, what I'm leading to here is the absolutely execrable and ludicrous Communications Decency Act of 1996, which calls for two years of jail time for anyone caught using "indecent" language over the net – as if reading profanities online affects us more dramatically than reading them on paper.

Who are the ignorant, Constitution-defying traitors creating these useless laws? Do they understand the medium they're trying to control? Do they understand that even if every American submissively deleted every four-letter word and naughty image from his or her Web page, we'd still be able to download "illegal" material from more liberated countries, for no extra cost, and for no extra time? In other words, what the politicians *claim* they're trying to accomplish – protecting children from moral-threatening content – *can't even be done.*

This "protect our helpless children" ideology is bogus. If the government was truly hip to the net, it would realize the Communications Decency Act has a huge flaw: We don't need the government to fruitlessly patrol the Internet when parents can simply install into their computers software like Net Nanny (**http://www.netnanny.com/netnanny/**) or Surf Watch (**http://www.surfwatch.com/**). These programs block all "sensitive" material from entering one's modem line. What's more, legislators have already passed effective laws against obscenity and child pornography. We don't need a redundant Act to accomplish this.

Obviously, the real political agenda here is control – or the fight to keep from losing it. Last I heard, 16 million Web pages were floating through cyberspace. Never before has communication been so instant, so global, and so anarchistic. And never before has our government been so spooked by the potential power "little people" have at their fingertips. Encryption, untraceable digital money, and the ability for anyone to cheaply and quickly send pictures and words to potentially millions of others terrifies the hell out of government control freaks. Thus, the Communications Decency Act, which "repudiates your own Constitution and insults the dreams of Jefferson, Washington, Mill, Madison, DeToqueville, and Brandeis," as Electronic Frontier Foundation Co-Founder John Perry Barlow **(http://www.eff.org/~barlow)** so eloquently puts it in his Cyberspace Independence Declaration. Barlow's solution? "These dreams must now be born anew in us," he writes.

To realize this rebirth, we must beat Big Brother at his own game. On Feb. 8 and 9, Web residents from all over the country blackened the backgrounds of their Web pages to protest the Act. Although I greatly appreciated the Web alliance that shined throughout the net, I didn't touch my own Web pages. Besides being stubborn, I was enlightened by author and reality hacker R.U. Sirius, who said, "Don't black out *your* Web site. Black out *theirs.*"

The Communications Decency Act of 1996's ideology of "protecting our helpless children" is bogus. The real political agenda here is control – or the fight to keep from losing it.

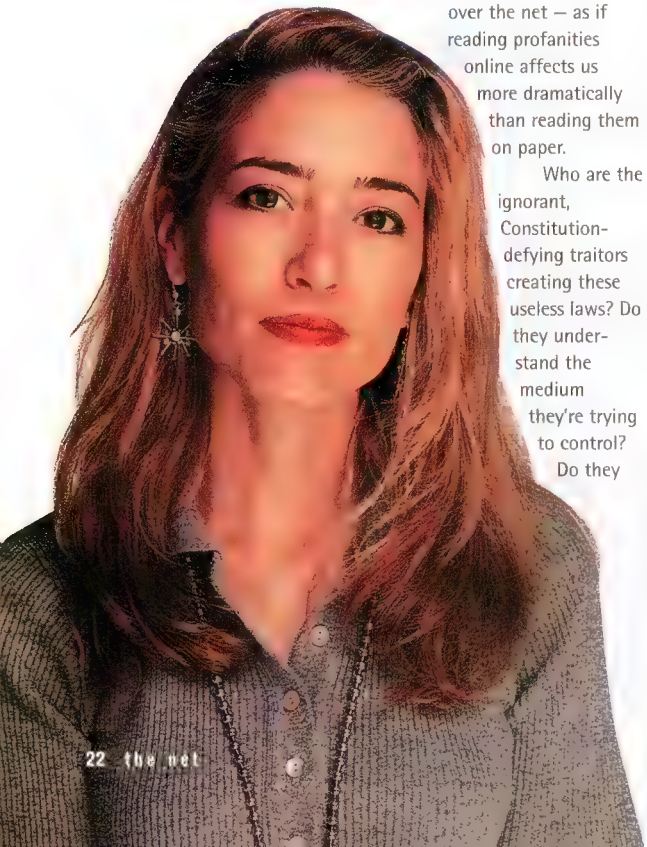
He's right. We have to be aggressive if we want to preserve our freedom of self-expression. After all, there *are* more of us, and we *are* hundreds of steps ahead of "them" when it comes to maneuvering through cyberspace. Here are just some of the ways to kick their collective ass:

1. Create a list of hotlinks to "subversive" Web sites that are based outside the United States. They forgot to make hotlinks illegal in the Act.
2. Hide your words and graphics in pictures or sound files by using steganography, which can only be retrieved by co-conspiring receivers. (Visit Stego-creator Romana Machado at **http://www.best.com/~fqa/romana/**)
3. Set up an account in Europe where electronic data can be freely exchanged.
4. Use Hex on Exon, a program that skirts the law by replacing dirty words in text files with the names of Congresspeople and Senators who voted for the Telecom Bill. Run your e-mail through this program before e-mailing it. The recipient can run the message back through Hex on Exon to get the original nasty version. (Go to **http://users.aol.com/lapreysys/index.html** for a free copy of the program.)

It's funny, now that we finally have a medium that truly allows us to exercise our First Amendment rights, the government is trying to censor it.

To hell with them. Continue to engage in free speech on the net. It's the only way to win the battle.

Carla Sinclair (carla@well.com) is the author of *Net Chick*, co-editor of *Happy Mutant Handbook*, and kahuna of her own zine, *bOING bOING*. Visit her Clubhouse! at http://www.cyborganic.com/People/carla.



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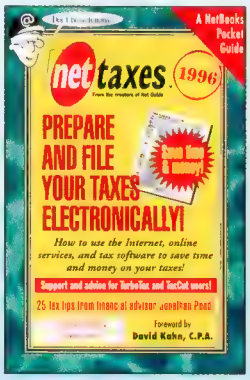

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Regulation Begins At Home

David Sobel

On Feb. 8, President Clinton signed into law sweeping new telecommunications reform legislation. One provision of the new law — the controversial Communications Decency Act (CDA) — could have a devastating impact on the Internet. The CDA makes it a felony to transmit "indecent" or "patently offensive" content via the net in a manner that might render such material available to minors. As the President signed the bill, thousands of Web sites blackened their pages in protest.

A constitutional challenge was immediately launched in federal court in Philadelphia (current information on the lawsuit is available at **http://www.epic.org/free_speech/censorship/lawsuit/**). While the CDA may not survive judicial scrutiny, the issue of online censorship will not go away anytime soon.

Senator James Exon and other proponents of the CDA claim that Internet content restrictions are needed to protect children from "inappropriate" material. While we might all agree with that simplistic notion, we have very different ideas of what a child-friendly Internet might look like. Most of us would agree that hard-core obscenity is "inappropriate" (and existing law, before the enactment of the CDA, prohibited the distribution of such material). But what about information on safe-sex and AIDS prevention?

There are communities in which that kind of educational material has been kept out of the public schools. Likewise any references to homosexuality. There are even places where the teaching of evolution (as opposed to "creationism") is controversial. Against this cultural backdrop, who is going to decide what is "inappropriate" or "indecent" on the global Internet?

After wrestling with this question for a long time, I've come to believe that the answer can be found in the approach taken in the non-digital world. Conservative religious groups have established their own alternatives to the public school curricula they find offensive.

From day-care programs to institutions like Bob Jones University and Liberty University, they have created places where their children can be insulated from secular influences that they find "inappropriate." They've also set up their own cable television networks as an alternative source of information and entertainment.

I think that's great — it's the way the First Amendment is supposed to work. You don't ask the government to censor speech that you find offensive; you create an alternative.

How can this approach be applied to online communications? If, as the censorship advocates say, parents want their kids to experience online communications but worry about the adult-oriented content they might encounter, there ought to be a substantial market for alternative services.

How about "Families Online," a closed system where content is strictly regulated and parents can opt out of Usenet or World Wide Web access?

Or perhaps the service could provide "filtered" Internet access, permitting connections to only those areas that have been pre-approved by the system's administrators. Interestingly, these are the very techniques that the censorship advocates would like to impose on the *entire* Internet.

They're free to create such an oasis of their own (and maybe even make some money), but why should the rest of us be dumbed-down to the level of what they find "appropriate" under threat of prosecution?

Why not apply to the online experience the approach conservative religious institutions have taken in the non-digital world — establishing their own alternatives to public school curricula they find offensive? Let's see closed "family" online services.

The issue of children and the net is one area in which the over-hyped "information superhighway" analogy might be appropriate.

Children don't drive automobiles, but we've created alternatives that allow them to get a taste of the experience.

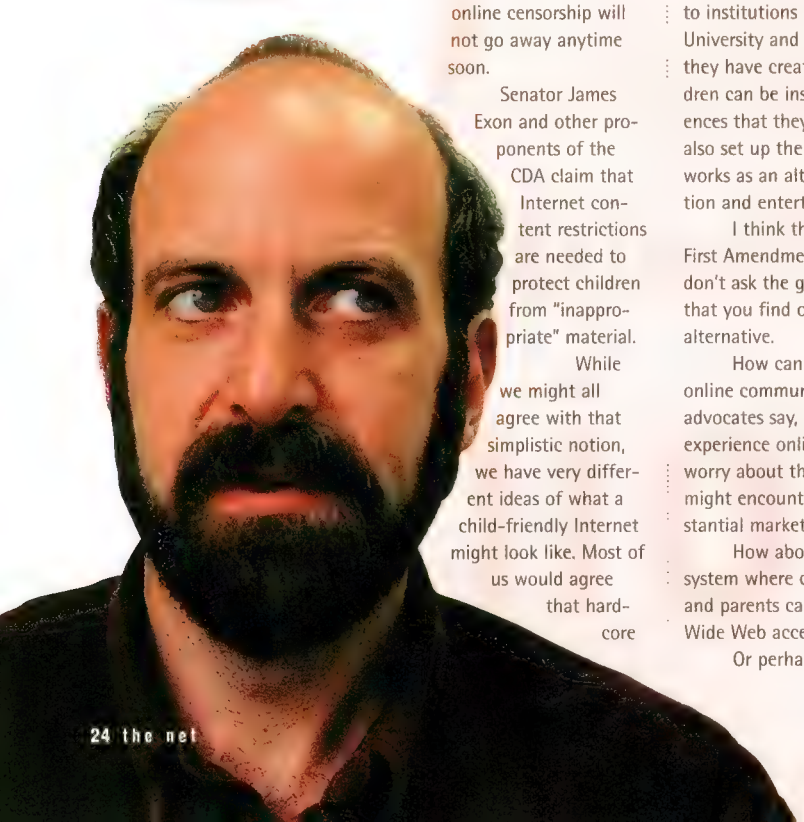
Toddlers can "drive" in little plastic, pedal-operated "cars." When they get a little older, they can ride in bumper-cars at an amusement park.

Eventually, they might graduate up to a go-kart track. These experiences may actually make them more responsible when the time comes for the real thing. But in our desire to create safe alternatives for kids, we don't relegate adults to the bumper-car ride. Lest it be assumed that opponents of the CDA have no concerns about the content of the Internet, I should note that there's plenty of material out there that I personally find offensive.

Child pornography is universally condemned (and, as noted, already illegal without the CDA). There are racist and anti-Semitic sites that are, to my mind, "patently offensive."

But the First Amendment says that "Congress shall make no law" restricting freedom of speech. Sometimes that can be a bitter pill to swallow, but in the long run, it's a lot better than censorship. The solution to "offensive" content is not less speech and fewer alternatives — it's more speech and newer alternatives.

David Sobel (sobel@epic.org) is legal counsel to the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, DC and co-counsel in litigation challenging the constitutionality of the CDA.



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Culture Clash

Geek Girl Gets Dad Online — Then Faces the Consequences When Her Worlds Collide

Drue Miller

I'm part of an emerging subculture — Adult Children of Recently Wired Parents. I'm telling my story, in the hope that it may help others.

In 1993, my brothers and I gave my father his first computer. He was a little overwhelmed, but after a slow start (and a lot of phone calls to us), he was churning out neatly spell-checked letters.

Given the success of this venture, I set him up on CompuServe the following year. "We can exchange e-mail, Dad. It'll be fun."

And it has been fun, but also very trying. I hadn't anticipated how strange this world would seem to him. I mean, it's e-mail. I use it almost as often as I speak. It's second nature to me...

But not to him. The first week, I received frantic notes: "Help! I don't know if you're receiving these messages or not." Or "How do I reply to your message?" After a little while, though, the technology was under control and Dad got down to business corresponding as only a parent can:

Date: 10 Jan 95 12:09:13 EST
From: "Robert Miller"
To: "Drue Miller"
Subject: Message from mom

Drue, your mother is worried about the rain in CA. Was your old first-floor apartment in Marin Co. under water? And what about your current apartment? And what about your work location? And what about your driving down all those wet hills? And what about parking? Do you wear galoshes, raincoat, rainhat, and umbrella? Isn't e-mail great!

Then the messages grew a little more guilt-laden:

Date: 20 Jan 95 23:48:38 EST
From: "Robert Miller"
To: "Drue Miller"
Subject: E-mail, where is it?

Everyday I check "get mail" and much to our disappointment, none is waiting. Your mother believes the only truly dependable source of incoming mail are refunds, contest announcements, and National Family Opinion surveys. Thanks to good old Ed McMahon and junk mail, us old folks are not forgotten! I'm enrolled in an opinion survey test of two new underarm deodorants.

An e-nag. I felt horrible. I was being neglectful. So, I did what I do with my friends to let them know I love and care about them: I began forwarding him all the funny stories and Usenet postings that end up in my in-box.

Date: 23 Jan 95 23:06:01 EST
From: "Robert Miller"
To: "Drue Miller"
Subject: No More Junk Mail

Drue, we love you and want to hear about your life — but do all you cyberspace cadets get your jollies out of weird humor in lieu of legitimate discourse? Surely CMU did more for you than cyber junk mail?

That was over a year ago. These days, he's almost as much of an e-mail fiend as me. He sends detailed accounts of everything that goes on back home — weather reports, neighborhood gossip, play-by-plays of household repairs. In some ways I feel like I never left.

I'd never fully appreciated my father's wonderful writing until I began receiving e-mail from him. His quirky sense of humor (a blend of paranoid newbie and overprotective parent) seems especially well-suited to the net: I routinely forward his best pieces around to friends (his suggestion that I wear a surgical mask when flying to guard against other peoples' germs was particularly well-received). And his fear about the GOOD TIMES letter was, well, touching in its innocence.

Funny thing is, this whole experience has given me some sense of what he went through with us kids. Watching your parents grapple with a new technology is a lot like witnessing a child's first steps. I've even saved his first messages, his first emoticons, his first use of net.jargon...

And his first URL, sent Feb. 1, 1996. "Follow and join the Groundhog celebration at Gobblers' Nob (**http://www.groundhog.org**)," he wrote. I sat back in my chair and thought about this for a second. My dad is on the Web. My DAD is on the Web. I knew it'd happen sooner or later, but I wasn't prepared for the actual event.

My dad is out here. His world is opening up on a part of my life he had no concept of before. It's great, because he'll finally have some inkling of what exactly I do for a living. And it's terrifying, because he might find things — things that I hadn't planned on telling him. I mean, he doesn't even know I have a motorcycle — do I want him to know that I rode it down Market Street with 999 other women during last year's Pride Parade (**http://www.vivid.com/~drue/pride.html**)? He's doesn't know about the tattoo, either, but he could find photos of me (**http://www.cyborganic.com/Cafe/SF/TND/96/02/08/fashion.html**) sitting on some guy's lap hiking my skirt up to show it off. How will he react to my death threats against Mickey Mouse (**http://www.vivid.com/~drue/govdrue.html**)? And what will he think when he learns what my friends (**http://enuxsa.eas.asu.edu/~fetters/drue.html**) have written about me (**http://www.personal.umich.edu/~ryandhoz/fun/nethunt.html**)? (For that matter, what will he think of my friends — **http://www.vivid.com/~drue/friends.html**?) Nope, nope, I'm clearly not ready to face the answers to those questions.

Part of me is happy that he's arrived. The net is one of my very favorite places, and the idealist in me wants him to experience all the joy that I have out here. The realist in me, however, is wondering whether I can prevent him from digging too deeply. Friends are going through similar woes — one posted a love letter on his site, only to be quizzed at length by his mother the next day: "Who's the woman?" Ugh, how embarrassing....

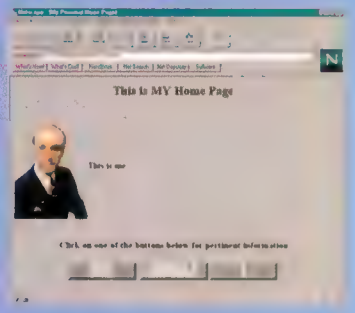
I know my number can't be far behind. And so, in anticipation of that day when Dad points his browser at my site, I've prepared a page (**http://www.vivid.com/~drue/dad.html**) just for him. Let's hope he finds it before anything else.

Drue Miller (drue@vivid.com) is the Webmistress for vivid studios in San Francisco, CA. She really, really hopes her father isn't reading this.

WHAT YOU GONNA PUT ON YOUR WEB PAGE?

My inter-office presentation. It's rather revealing, if I do say so myself. Blame the 80's, but I've always fancied a corner office.

Design your own Web page. It's easy with InContext Spider™ for Windows. All you need to know is how to type, point and click. In just a few simple steps your page is on the World Wide Web. If that isn't easy enough, there are dozens of ready-made home pages to get you started. You can input graphics and create hypertext links to other Web sites with just a few commands. InContext Spider features an integrated Mosaic browser and supports Netscape and Microsoft Internet Explorer, so cruising the Web is really easy too. Whether you're into corporate or counter culture, InContext Spider is the easiest way to get it on the Web. Find out more. Call 1-800-263-0127 or check out our evaluation program at **http://www.incontext.com**



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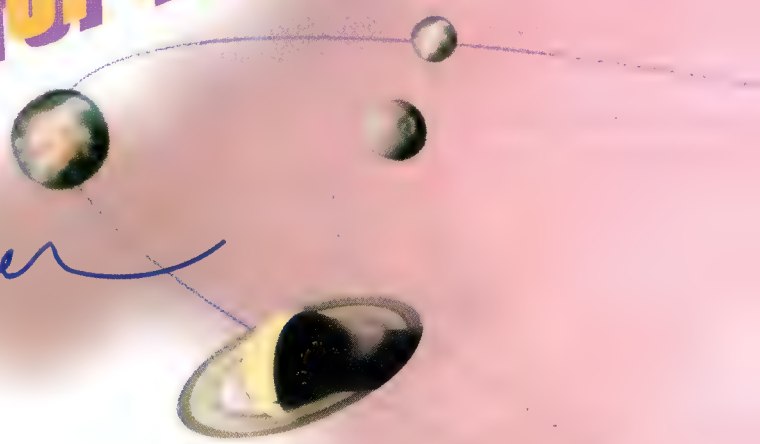
To Marc Andreessen, Thanks For Everything!

Michael Eisner



Invasion of the Modem Snatchers. The Mogul That Ate The Internet. Creature From the Cyberspace Lagoon. The titles are kitschy, but they may not be that far from the truth. Movie studios, TV networks, and recording companies are rushing to hammer up sites on the Web. But what kind of places are they creating? And what will happen to a populist medium when Hollywood-style entertainment moves in?

by Courtney Macavinta

Tinsel Town is breaking down the Internet's door. Every movie poster these days sports a URL. Sitcoms have their own home pages. Rock bands demo their audio tracks online. What's going on here?

Hollywood's discovered that we're spending time online. Armed with surveys indicating that Internet use is eating into traditional leisure activities — like going to movies — cigar-chomping, Armani suit-wearing, number-crunching entertainment barons are heading into cyberspace.

The Tinsel Town execs are banking on the belief, expressed by Richard Glosser, senior vice president of interactive marketing at Sony's Columbia Tristar Television, that the Web is poised to shift from a medium developed by "a group of technical people" to one that's run by "a group of people who know narrative, comedy, and drama." Also motivating Hollywood producers is the fear they'll be shut out of a potentially lucrative medium. As Kay Dangaard, senior vice president of the first online broadcasting company, American Cybercast, notes: "If you're not involved now, it's going to be hard to be a player in the future."

So Hollywood's doing what it's always done best: testing new waters in hopes they'll turn to wine. But if entertainment companies want a piece of the online pie, a "Friends" home page won't be enough. The gun is smoking in the race to launch original online entertainment. Just as people who don't like a particular TV show have a wide array of other cable channels to turn to, so too can Web surfers slip away with a click of a mouse. Whether Hollywood will bulldoze over or preserve the net's intrinsic underground charm and its function as a fluid, ever-changing communications medium remains to be seen.

Riding the Wave of an Older Medium

It's no secret that Americans (296 million of them) watch television. So it's probably not surprising that many media companies are repositioning existing TV content on the Web. The thinking is: Surfing with a remote control isn't that different from cruising the Web with a mouse. Either way, the entertainment companies will account for your time with advertisers.

TV and cable broadcasters are relying on strong brand names to make the leap onto the net. One of the first tests of this strategy will be E! online (**http://www.eonline.com/**). It's a joint venture between E! Entertainment Television, the 24-hour cable network that describes itself as the "premiere entertainment brand on television today," and c|net: the computer network, which produces a TV show, plus c|net online (**http://www.**

GAMES
CASINO
Priestley
Priestley

The large-scale, advertiser-supported E! online (http://www.eonline.com/) will try to satisfy Web surfers' appetites for glittery entertainment coverage.

How Many People Use the Internet?

An estimated 9.5 million Americans use the Internet, according to a nationwide poll by the American Internet User Survey (**http://etrg.findsvp.com/features/newinet.html**). The same poll says 7.5 million Americans surf the Web. The survey was sponsored by some two dozen technology and entertainment companies.

The survey's findings are much lower than Nielsen Media Research's claim of 24 million people (aged 16 and older) who had used the net within the three months prior to being surveyed. Nielsen's results can be found at **http://www.nielsenmedia.com/demo.htm**

cnet.com/), a site devoted to computers and digital technology, and shareware.com (**http://www.shareware.com/**) (see *The Net* April 96, page 19).

The large-scale, advertiser-supported E! online site will be entirely devoted to up-to-the-minute entertainment news, gossip, and backstage peeks. The site will also offer interactive content — such as netcasting live events — "that complements E!'s television programming and allows viewers to interact with E!'s products and hosts," according to E! online.

The site will benefit from c|net's exclusive DREAM (Delivery of Real-time Enhanced Advertising Messages) software, which lets advertisers deliver customized messages to specifically targeted audiences. E! online has also made clear that it will embrace the latest technologies, including Java, Shockwave, and RealAudio.

Commenting on the rationale for the site, Frank Voci, vice president of production and creative affairs for c|net, emphasized that E! online will let its creators reach net-savvy TV watchers. He notes that although "entertainment is the most popular category on the Internet, the dollars are much bigger in TV. We're trying to get an audience who uses both mediums."

A host of other TV broadcasters are bringing original shows to the net. At press time, FOX Broadcasting Company's Web site (**http://www.foxnetwork.com/**) was mainly focused on promoting FOX's TV shows and giving viewers "more of an interaction with the [TV] shows," according to John P. Roberts, director of online entertainment for FOX. But the company is planning to launch several weekly episodic Web sites this year, says Roberts, though he declined to reveal specific story lines. FOX Television unit fx, the first cable station to launch a Web site (**http://www.fxnetworks.com/**), recently updated its site to include a number of original content pages that will be "made fresh daily."

FOX is preparing several Web-based shows for debut this year (http://www.foxnetwork.com/)

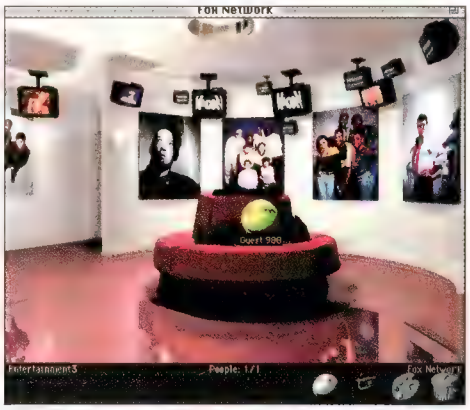
The Audience is the Message

TV producers are also seeing the net as a vehicle for gleaning new material for TV shows. Turner Broadcasting Company has put a twist on audience interaction with its cyberlaunch, Spiv (**http://www.spiv.com/**), an online zine for teenagers and young adults that contains content created solely for the Web. Spiv sports sections on fashion, music, philosophy, and technology. Turner will use Spiv, with its hip attitude and funky graphics, to test-market a potential new TV show and drive content for it by surveying audience tastes and desires.

Turner will use Spiv (http://www.spiv.com/) to test-market a potential new TV show.

Spiv's producers acknowledge that Web patronage pales in comparison to TV viewership, but say they expect the site to provide more information than a two-week TV pilot would about how twenty-somethings like to be entertained. Sarah Cotsen, Spiv's general manager, says the site is actively soliciting suggestions and criticism. The idea is that Spiv will create a feedback loop allowing Web surfers to make an immediate impact on content, both on TV and online.

What's working in Spiv's favor, notes Cotsen, is that "dorms and colleges have Internet access. The Internet is going to capture a significant share of students' leisure time. They may not all have TVs in their



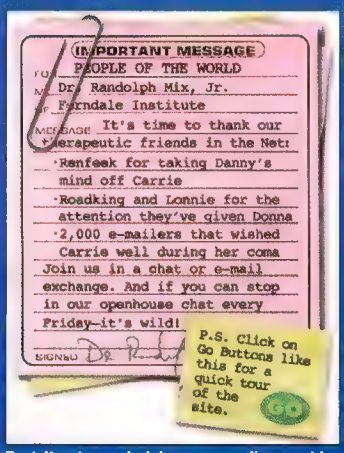
FOX's Fox Palace area (http://www.foxnetwork.com/Palace/index.html) lets visitors (who appear as animated characters) see, chat, and interact with other people online, including celebrities from FOX shows.

Ferndale: Life in a Digital Fishbowl

It sounds like a promising new healing tool for the mentally distressed: Net Therapy. Work out your problems online, through e-mail and personal Web pages. Net Therapy is being practiced right now at Ferndale, a hilltop retreat in Northern California.

But don't try checking in just yet. The therapy sessions are part of a fictional, interactive, Web-based soap opera (http://www.ferndale.com/) produced by Songline Studios.

Unlike the players on other online episodic efforts, like The Spot (http://www.thespot.com/), Ferndale's characters probably won't set trends in hair styles or fashion. Instead, they're demented, absurd, and weird. And though it may be hard to believe, the characters and the site itself are scripted by just one person, Howard Cushnir. It's his job to make every click interesting, from the journals to the audio therapy sessions. A feature film screenwriter for more than 10 years, Cushnir gives birth to bizarre details, like a character's tongue locket with a note inside reveal-



Post-It notes and pink message slips provide a quick update to the latest therapy session.

The entire staff of Ferndale, an interactive Web-based soap that blurs the line between fact and fiction.

ing the story of a child abandonment; a thought scan device that reads minds; and a character who dreams of amnesia and wakes up sick with them.

Visitors to the site are greeted with the latest buzz by Dr. Mix and can go directly to updates by clicking on Post-it notes. Documents – like patients' Ferndale applications, news clippings, police records, and pictures – are archived in each patient's "Webumentary."

Part of Ferndale's cast migrated to the West Coast from Mississippi, where they previously worked on "Crime Scene," an online murder investigation that caught media attention after a disappointed surfer found out it wasn't real (http://www.quest.net/crime/crime.html). The crime site was produced by Tom Arnold, who now directs Ferndale.

The weekly production costs for Ferndale are in the thousands of dollars, Arnold said. Actors work around 20 hours per week, some assistants as much as 60 hours.

Ferndale's goal is to combine interactivity. Its chat sessions have stage directions, and characters offer homestyle hospitality in their chat rooms (one character, Donna, dishes up doughnuts and coffee). The welcome for patients also depends on the way visitors play.

Keeping a delicate balance between fiction and reality is something cast members worry about. "I got an e-mail from a guy one night that said he read my journal and was really concerned about me," said Valerie Wilson, who plays Graciela. "He felt responsible for my problems."

Ferndale will continue to blur the lines between cyberspace and the physical world, Cushnir said. Recently, two characters played hooky in San Francisco and saw an

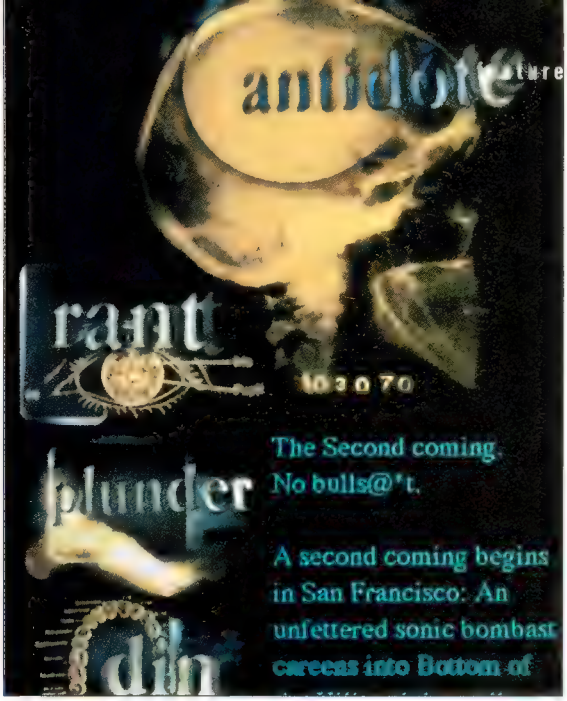
How long 'til they get cured? You get to cast your vote in the therapy sessions.

ad for the Ferndale Web site on a bus. The characters grappled with the question of whether they're real patients or actors.

As of now, the cast of Ferndale holds daily chats on American Online, but Arnold hopes the interaction will change soon. When patients venture out on adventures, he wants the people they meet to be more than extras. "We envision that one day people will live in Ferndale with us," he said. "We invent a new world everyday. We're developing the rules, the language, and we're really excited about it."

If people aren't satisfied testing out their amateur psychology on Ferndale patients, there is one other option: Dr. Mix is a little fed up with his current misbehaving crew. He wants new folks to join his therapy. Who could resist his pitch? "Where else can you kiss a fish, and fall into a coma, and have your innermost thoughts broadcast to the entire world?"

– Courtney Macavinta



Spiv's Antidote (http://www.spiv.com/antidote/) sports an online listening station, concert reviews, Q&A with members of featured bands, and more.

rooms, but they do have PCs."

Paramount Digital Entertainment (**http://www.paramount.com/**) also may use interactive "shows" that will appear on the Web, the Microsoft Network, and other commercial online services to drive TV programming. Leonard Washington, executive vice president and producer of Paramount Digital Entertainment, says that "if you create characters online that people grow to like, then I says, let's roll the dice and make a TV show out of it."

As the Web Turns

Just as soap operas became a staple of TV broadcasting early on, online serials are also popping all over the net. Last summer, the first Web-based soap burst onto the Web: The Spot (**http://www.thespot.com/**). It's about five twentysomethings living in a Santa Monica, CA beach house (*The Net* Feb. 96, page 47). The women are hot, the guys hunky yet clueless – sound familiar? The Spot's been highly successful: It receives 35,000 hits a day, says Kay Dangaard, senior vice president of American Cybercast, which produces the show.

The success of The Spot isn't lost on Hollywood. Surely it's no coincidence that NBC has hired the creators of The Spot – Scott Zakarin and Troy Bolotnick – to write an online melodrama for the NBC Web site (**http://www.nbc.com/**). Already, there are at least three other Web-based soaps. Techno 3 (**http://www.bluepearl.com/**), the story of three attractive women who compete for the affection of a cyber terrorist; Ferndale (**http://www.ferndale.com/**), which features therapy patients who reveal their secrets online and get advice from cyberspace (see sidebar); and Gay Daze (**http://www.gay-**

Hollywood Gets Worried

Hours being spent online have to come from somewhere. Internet use is indeed pulling away consumers from traditional communications mediums. The American Internet User Survey (**http://etrg.findsvp.com/features/newinet.html**) reports that of 1,000 randomly selected "qualified Internet users" who were interviewed by telephone:

- 32 percent said their TV use had declined
- 15 percent reported that their video watching had declined
- 13 percent said their magazine reading was down
- 12 percent said they were spending less time reading newspapers; and
- 10 percent reported less radio listening

See **http://etrg.findsvp.com/graphics/internet/inetuse.gif** for details.

The first online soap was The Spot (http://www.thespot.com/).

daze.com/), a daily episodic melodrama about gay men and lesbians that's set in Los Angeles.

Movie Promotion Moves Online

Less concerned with driving new content online are film companies, which are primarily using the net to promote new releases. Their sites are packed with interactive elements, like games, contests, and theme centers, and they're brimming with Netscape plug-ins. But all this is really to serve one purpose: entice people to turn off their computers and duck into the nearest movie theater or toy store (for those movie tie-ins).

Sony Corporation (**http://www.sony.com/**) is hyping the film area of its site (**http://www.spe.sony.com/Pictures/index.html**) as the first to integrate Macromedia's Shockwave multimedia technology. The site also uses Netscape's 2.0 "frames" technology, which lets multiple, independently scrollable panels be displayed on a single Web page. Together, Shockwave and Netscape 2.0 let the site "offer users a more compelling interactive experience, thereby pushing the envelope of film promotion on the Web," says Richard Glosser, senior vice president of Sony's Columbia Tristar interactive programming unit. Sony's burgeoning and extravagant site is about to get even more so: Sony is in the process of launching, in conjunction with Visa, the Sony Station, which will combine original-content entertainment and shopping opportunities in a "walk-through" entertainment center (*The Net* Feb. 96, page 20).

"E… material out there, or they're just adding to it. What are we going to do with 50 The Spots? We already have television channels, 24 hours a day, to turn to."

— Nick Rothenberg

Immerse yourself in released and upcoming movies in the Movies section of the Sony site (http://www.spe.sony.com/Pictures/SonyMovies/index.html).

The Sony Station, a venture between Visa and Sony, marries original-content entertainment with online shopping opportunities.

Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment (**http://www.foxhome.com/**) first turned to the Web as a new promotion vehicle when it created a site for the *Star Wars* trilogy last summer. Director George Lucas opened up his archives and let the site showcase props and other items never been seen on camera. The site "got one to 10 million hits per week," says Ruby Randell, vice president of marketing for the company. "We set up e-mail for the site on a Friday, and by Monday, there were 1,000 e-mails."

Kids are especially tickled by movie marketing sites, Randell says. *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* area of the site, which hyped this film for kids, received millions of hits. "All the kids wrote us saying, 'Please give us more information,' and 'I want more games.' "

MCA/Universal offers Cyberwalk (**http://www.mca.com/**), an online version of the Universal Studios theme park. Here you'll find downloadable previews of new films and an amusement park "ride" — "Back to the Future," an ersatz research lab led by movie character Dr. Emmet Brown (who was played by actor Christopher Lloyd). Coming soon are *Jurassic Park* and *Waterworld* rides.

Paramount's Nick of Time area (**http://www.paramount.com/nickoftime/**) mimics the action showcased in the Johnny Depp film of the same name. If offers an interactive game where you play the Depp character, Gene Watson. You're given a gun and a picture of a woman. A clock ticks. Each possible scenario presented to you has drawbacks: If you don't kill the woman, your kidnapped daughter will die. If you call the police, the kidnapper, who's watching your every move, will kill your daughter. If you kill the woman, your daughter will have a murderer for a parent. When you finish playing, a plug for the movie urges you to go find out what really happens.

The Walt Disney Company is a more recent entrant onto the Web. Its newly launched, 2,500-page-deep site (**http://www.disney.com/**) is designed to entertain the entire family while also introducing the full breadth of Disney's offerings — movies, TV, music, retail products, and theme parks. The site, which uses an interactive newspaper as its navigational tool, is filled with games, puzzles, photos (9,600), and downloadable clips (434 audio and 204 video files). It will eventually feature chat, online

MCA/Universal's Cyberwalk (http://www.mca.com/) is an online theme park with film-related amusement "rides."

Paramount Pictures Online Studio (http://www.paramount.com/) promotes its current releases with background info, interactive games, photos, and more.

MGM's Web site (http://www.mgmua.com/) is using the Web to archive its 2,300 titles, appealing to information junkies and movie lovers alike.

Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment (http://www.foxhome.com/) used its site to showcase *Star Wars* props and items never seen before.

transactions, RealAudio, and live video feeds, according to Winnie Wechsler, senior vice president of Disney Online.

Archives for Film Buffs

In addition, many movie sites are harnessing the information capabilities of the net and creating robust archives of old releases. MGM (**http://www.mgmua.com/**), noting that net surfers by nature are information junkies, is listing on its site information on all of its 2,300 titles. Beth Bornhurst, MGM's vice president of market development, says that "people are using this as a trivia site, and trivia is entertainment, too."

Fox's Web site is also home to an expansive library of film titles: 3,000 to be exact. According to Fox, the intent of putting the library up online was to tell "the colorful story of Twentieth Century Fox's film-making legacy of eight decades." This is the first time movie fans have gotten access to the company's entire catalogue of films, not to mention movie facts. A search engine lets users access information on any movie in the archive.

Breaking the Sound Barrier

People who tune into the Web for music are not likely to change their favorite bands' compositions with e-mail critiques. So the music industry is less interested in using the Web to drive music content than to debut new artists, play demos, give fans a peek into the lives of their favorite musicians, and even to sell CDs.

Most of the industry's sites have listening stations with audio clips (and even full tracks) of the latest hits by established and up-and-coming bands. Clicking on a title or album cover is like pushing the play button on a boom box.

A popular Web listening station is the Internet Jukebox (**http://interjuke.com/jukebox**), created by CD Now (**http://www.cdnow.com/**), a CD-selling site. It works hand in hand with record labels, giving them the ability to sell CDs over the net. Though some companies are skeptical about putting full tracks online, says Product Manager Jon Green, Internet Jukebox features 115 albums. Visitors (who have to download Progressive Networks' RealAudio 2.0 from **http://www.RealAudio.com/**) can surf other sites while listening to the Jukebox's selections. Songs are saved on the computers' hard drives after being chosen; when a song finishes, users have to go back to the Jukebox to pick another.

But some in the music industry say they see the net less as a sales tool than as a means of drawing fans closer to their music idols.

Geffen Records' site (http://www.geffen.com/) features a link to CD Now, as well as musicians' self-produced Web pages.

Geffen/DGC Records (**http://www.geffen.com/**) offers a link to CD Now, but also gives people a chance to check out artists' self-produced Web pages, says Jim Griffen, director of technology at Geffen. The site for the band White Zombie, for instance, has audio and video processed through the band's own chaotic, post-apocalyptic filter. Notes Griffen: "People [online] are looking for their favorite music, not a record company. You can't arrive at the party and say, 'Buy this, buy that.' If a company isn't putting its employees online, it shouldn't even be in cyberspace."

Power to the Musicians

Record companies aren't the only ones to

Off the Beaten Track: Alternative Music Online

Commercial pop and underground music resources commingle on the Internet. If you want to stay in touch with the latest underground, alternative, indie, world, or otherwise non-mainstream music, the Web has lots of choices. Here's a mere sampling.

Alternative Rescue
http://www.linknet.net/zoar/alternative_rescue/rescue.htm

Blank Generation Web
http://moon.st.rim.or.jp:1969/

Gamelan Music
http://www.kaiwan.com/~gamelan/balihome.html

Global Music Centre
http://www.eunet.fi/womad/#english

Internet Guide to Afro-Caribbean Music
http://www.ina.fr/Music/

Internet Nightclub
http://www.memcore.com/nightclub/

Mammoth Music Metalist
http://pathfinder.com/vibe/mmm/music.html

Mixmaster Morris
http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/trellos/homepage.html

Mizik
http://www.unik.no/~robert/mizik/mizik.html

Music Scene International
http://www.musicscene.com/msi/charts.html

Music View
http://www.webcom.com/xcomm/MV/

New Rock
http://www.glaci.com/market/nurok/nurok.html

Nu-Energy
http://www.cd-rom-online.com/nsd/ catalog.html

Reach Inter@active
http://www.reachint.com/

Rockweb Interactive
http://www.rockweb.com/

RootsWorld
http://www.rootsworld.com/rw/

Superunknown
http://www.csusm.edu/public/guests/fm/

Techno Underground
http://www.sonetis.com/~gnichol/

Vapour Trails
http://www.wam.umd.edu/~cure/

Web Wide World of Music
http://american.recordings.com/wwwofmusic/index.html

Worldwide Internet Live Music Archive
http://www.wilma.com/

Worldwide Music Expo
http://www.eunet.fi/gmc/womex/womex.html

Chatting Up Stars

She put on her silky black tank dress, swept her hair back into a French twist, and spritzed perfume in all the right places. Tonight was the night. She was finally going to talk to him.

"Hello, Mr. Slater," she typed. "Or shall I call you Christian?"

No, it's not an excerpt from an alt.sex newsgroup, but it could happen during a celebrity chat session. The major online services and numerous Web sites are giving fans all over the globe a chance to rub elbows and talk shop with their favorite stars.

Actors, musicians, and even politicians have entered the chat arena. Big shareholders in celebrity stock such as Tom Hanks, Geena Davis, and Aerosmith have all interacted with fans online. In honor of February's Black History Month, NBC's Club Noir and Loci (http://www.loci.com), hosted a recording artist each night of the month. Quincy Jones, TLC, Chaka Khan, and Toni Braxton, to name a few, spent more than an hour each night responding to questions.

"I think, overall, the artists were surprised at the simplicity of being interviewed by fans, rather than hard-edged journalists," says the event's editor, Michele Squatrito. "While not all questions got answered, there is a comfort in seeing a big name like LL Cool J answering, 'What's your favorite song?' "

Fans asked Quincy Jones to compare female singers voices; about the impact of *Vibe* magazine; and whether he'll open a blues restaurant. Jones began his Feb. 1 session by writing, "This is the first time I've been online. And I'd like to say to all the cybersurfers in cyberspace that the industrial revolution is already over, and we're in the twenty-first century mindset.... It's almost like a dream to be personally involved in the stairway to the new century."

Greg Hartnet books and produces chat sessions for Prodigy. He says some guests, like Tony Bennett, get hundreds of questions. During the average chat hour, however, only 50 to 75 questions will receive a reply, he says.

But the odds of chatting with a star in person are much lower.

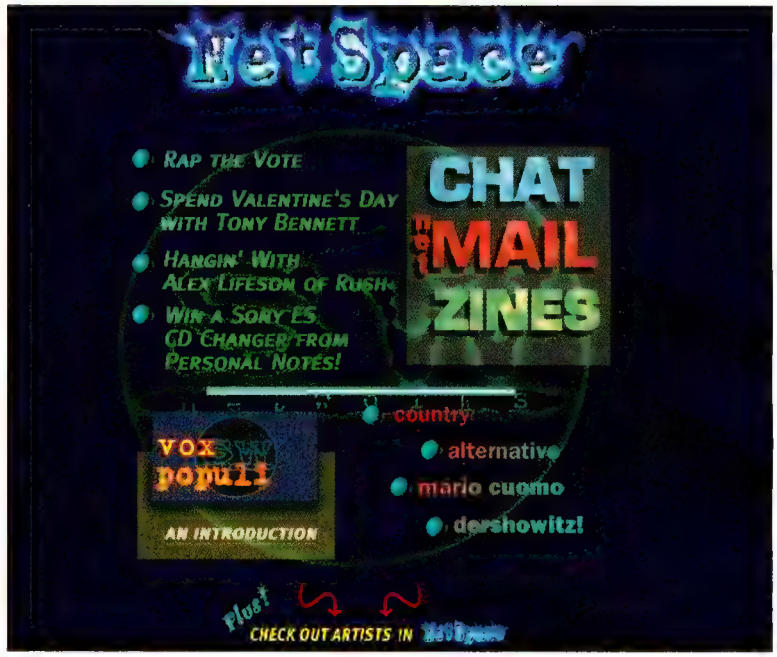
"If a fan sees a star in person, it's not a big mystery that they're going to be pushed back behind a velvet rope," says Carol Wallace of Prodigy.

AOL Live gets an average turnout of 250 people during its weekly celebrity chats, according to representative Judy Tashbook. She says the popularity of the chats is increasing among fans and stars alike: "Woody Allen said he liked being interviewed online so much, he hoped in the future to do all his interviews online."

Bringing chat to the next level with sound and images will give fans a chance to experience what production teams have been enjoying all along.

"Just to hear Quincy Jones speaking casually in that sexy voice of his," Squatrito says, "was something to remember."

— Courtney Macavinta



Club_moo within the Net Space area of Sony Online (http://www.swnetworks.com/) plays different musical genres (hip hop, alternative, hard music, country) on each of its floors.

One of the self-produced band Web pages you'll find on Geffen's site is by Garbage — "pop music kissed by chaos" (http://www.geffen.com/almo/garbage/).

benefit from a move to the net, however. The Internet Underground Music Archive (**http://www.iuma.com/**), or IUMA, is a burgeoning site that serves as a marketing tool for bands. IUMA began as a virtual garage for struggling bands, but is now a profitable business featuring the tracks of more than 800 independent musicians, according to IUMA Site Director Evan Heidtmann.

Bands pay about $240 in exchange for a year of play on IUMA. They get to upload one song, two pages of text, two images, and product merchandise information. IUMA builds the pages in-house, and offers the bands statistics and information on audience response. Like Turner's Spiv, IUMA is trying to work two media. It recently launched its own recording label, Off•Line Records. A compilation by seven IUMA bands was released earlier this year and can be purchased online.

And there's even places to go online that attempt to mimic sweaty, loud, smoke-filled clubs. Club_moo, in Sony Worldwide's Net Space (**http://www.swnetworks.com/**), includes music and talk-based radio programming, along with entertainment news. Club_moo plays a variety of musical genres, like hard rock, alternative, country, and hip hop, on its different floors. Sometimes, artists enter the space to chat with fans.

No Smooth Road: Pitfalls and Perils Face Hollywood

Though Hollywood companies are eagerly getting onto the Web, some in the Internet industry question their attempt to follow a traditional broadcast programming model. Nick Rothenberg, CEO of W3-Design (**http://www.w3-design.com/**), a Web site design firm whose clients include Paramount and the *Hollywood Reporter,* believes that entertainment companies should concentrate on making sites that adapt to visitors' desires and needs. He maintains: "The soap opera and television type sites are taking the broadcast mentality by creating content, then broadcasting it to a million users. The notion should be to make a million Web sites and send them out to a million users."

Rothenberg's company is working to make that happen. It's developing what it calls "liquid HTML" — software that allows an entire Web site to be driven from a database. A site would change to accommodate visitors'

browsers and modem speeds, while content would be customized according to their past usage, or what they tell the server they enjoy.

"Entertainment companies have to distinguish themselves from the mass of material out there, or they're just adding to it," Rothenberg says. "What are we going to do with 50 The Spots? We already have television channels, 24 hours a day, to turn to."

There's also some question as to whether people really want to be engaged interactively during their leisure time. Jennie Leavell, who maintains The Gate, the entertainment Web site for the two major daily newspapers in San Francisco (**http://www.sfgate.com/**), believes that people will continue to want to be passively enthralled by TV and movies, no matter how exciting digital interactivity gets. She also questions whether the net will ever really threaten traditional entertainment vehicles.

On Feb. 26, 1996, a search on Webcrawler (webcrawler.com) delivered: a list of 10,996 movie-related sites; 10,199 TV-related sites; and 34,289 music-related sites. For a control sample, consider that we found 288 knitting-related sites.

"There was speculation that VCRs would cut into the movie business, but movie theaters are still around," Leavell says. "The Internet won't destroy TV, either. It's just another choice."

Getting online entertainment noticed by people using the net for business, research, and e-mail is another peril Hollywood must overcome. Dr. Arthur Asa Berger, a broadcast and communications professor at San Francisco State University, says he doubts that people who use the Web for their jobs will stick around online to visit an interactive sitcom. If we use the net for work and communications, he adds, it's only natural that we'll choose a different medium — TV, say — for relaxation and leisure. "TV entertains us with beautiful women, men, and products. It's hard for people to tear themselves away from it."

More Caveats for Hollywood Online

Many longtime net users insist it's people, not pre-packaged content, that is the biggest form of online entertainment. Howard Reinghold, journalist and author of *Virtual Communities*, believes that e-mail exchange and chats are what occupy most people's Internet leisure time.

He continues: "I haven no objections to entertainment companies making money any way they want. But I worry about the information marketplace. Will citizens be able to create entertainment they can share with each other, or will it revert to the Time Warners and Disneys of the world?"

With all the challenges facing online entertainment developers, the industry has been forced back to school. Seminars charging as much as $400 a head are appearing all over Hollywood to train execs on how to succeed in cyberspace.

Hollywood is currently on a learning curve, but once it masters the new medium, it may accomplish its ultimate goal — to blanket the consumer politic with endless entertainment opportunities. Until then, however, Hollywood continues to market and sell, taking its best shot at online consumers.

One thing Tinsel Town may not have bargained with is that the Web, unlike TV, movies, or radio, puts the consumer in the power seat. As Jennie Leavell of SF Gate says: people like to spend time online "because they're the masters of where they're going. The idea of this new medium is that the medium itself is an entertainment vehicle."

Perhaps the least Hollywood can hope for is a place in your bookmarks.

Entertainment Online Recapped

As a consumer-oriented search site, Yahoo! offers the perfect bridge to the world of online entertainment. Its entertainment link **(http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/)** will point you to all the Hollywood sites, and a lot of underground content, as well. Here's a recap of the sites mentioned in this story.

E! online
http://www.eonline.com/
Why pay for cable, when E! content is online?

Ferndale
http://www.ferndale.com/
Help cyber patients work out their problems.

fx
http://www.fxnetworks.com/
This first cable station to go online.

FOX
http://www.foxnetwork.com/
A spirited site from the network that broke the Big Three's stranglehold on TV.

Gay Daze
http://www.gaydaze.com/
Los Angeles is the setting for this Web soap.

Geffen/DGC
http://www.geffen.com/
One of the first record companies to go online.

Internet Jukebox
http://interjuke.com/jukebox
A popular Web listening station.

Internet Underground Music Archive
http://www.iuma.com/
Download tunes from underground bands.

MCA/Universal Cyberwalk
http://www.mca.com/
Visit the virtual version of Universal Studios.

MGM/United Artists Lion's Den
http://www.mgmua.com/
Offers movie trivia and practical data.

NBC httv
http://www.nbc.com/
A sober site jam-packed with NBC data.

Paramount Pictures
http://www.paramount.com/
This online studio has an air of grandeur.

Sony Online
http://www.sony.com/
Sony is mergered *way* beyond electronics.

Spiv
http://www.spiv.com/
Ted has the Gen-X content to prove he's hip.

Techno 3
http://www.bluepearl.com/
The story of three women and a cyber terrorist.

The Spot
http://www.thespot.com/
The first online soap opera.

Twentieth Century Fox
http://www.foxhome.com/
The *Star Wars* area says this studio cares about fans.

Walk Disney Company
http://www.disney.com/
Making the net "a small world after all."

FREE registration, FREE entertainment ...

"...Vincent is in there – on the Internet – the hitman too. I don't know how and I'm not sure why. All I know is he's in terrible, terrible danger. Please Sam, this time you've got to help me."

CYBER

THE SEARCH IS ONLINE

and multiple opportunities to win prizes.

Travel through time, mind and cyberspace in *Cyberhunt*, the ongoing mystery thriller. It's unlike anything else on the Internet.

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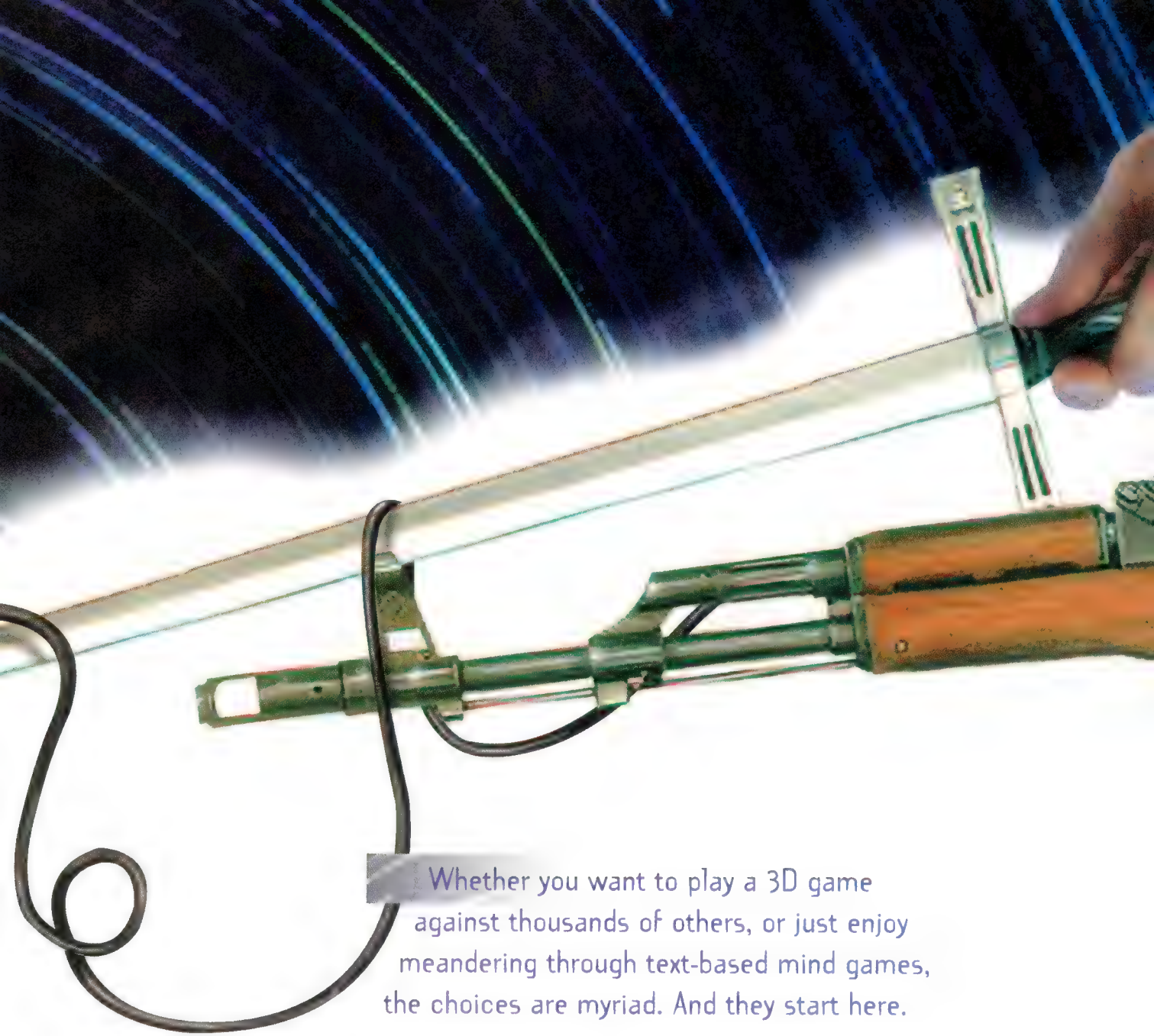
Are You Ready to Play?
START
TRIGGER



Whether you want to play a 3D game against thousands of others, or just enjoy meandering through text-based mind games, the choices are myriad. And they start here.

We bet that you are. As a matter of fact, our most recent survey showed that more than 80 percent of our readers regularly use their computers to play games.

While we've only been able to play *DOOM* against opponents who live on the other side of the world for a matter of months, gaming online has been happening for about as long as online services and bulletin boards have existed. Text-based games such as Multi-User Dimensions or Dungeons (MUDs) first came into existence in 1977. (The name "MUD" made its debut in 1978, when Roy Trubshaw, then a student at the University of Essex, England, wrote what he called a Multi-User Dungeon — a tribute to an earlier single-user game named *DUNGEN*.) The first MUD, called *Mazewar*, had players wandering around a maze trying to shoot and kill other players who were also wandering around the maze.

Now that we're getting used to having full-motion video and high-resolution graphics on our screens, through which we meander or fly at the touch of a key, it may be hard to imagine playing a MUD like *WIZARD*. In text-based games such as *WIZARD*, players are presented with descriptions of scenes such as, "You are standing at the end of a road in front of a cottage. Around you is a forest. To your left is a large rock. There is a sword lying on top of the rock."

Players then type in their actions, such as "get sword" or "look cottage," and subsequently are given a whole new scenario based on their action — and on it continues.

Boring, right? Not for many thousands of people who still regularly play MUDs — and the best part is that, no matter what kind of gaming you like, it's probably available for play on an online service or via modem. And if it's not "online-ready" at this point, it probably will be soon. So whether you're looking for a MUD or a simple hangman game on a Web page, or you want to be part of a 600-person, multi-player, full-motion graphic war game, it's out there. And it starts here.

You are holding a copy of The Net magazine. In front of you is a feature on online gaming. There is a page for you to turn.

"turn page"

by Crystal Waters

Twitch and Shout at 28,800 BPS

Online Gaming Sparks Rivalries Between Anonymous Opponents

by Steve Poole

Tired of matching wits with artificial intelligence? Would flesh-and-blood human opponents inspire you to clean house in the heat of battle? Until recently, your online, multi-player gaming options were limited to lackluster content offered by the online service monoliths. Now a suite of new online services expressly designed for multi-player gaming have emerged, and they're offering big entertainment for reasonable amounts of money.

The upside: The major online services have improved their gaming content to keep pace with the upstarts. So configure your keyboards, and prepare for competition — here's the skinny on the state of online gaming.

ImagiNation Network

Address: 577 Airport Boulevard, Burlingame, CA, 94010
Phone: 800 462 4461
Pricing: $9.95 for five hours a month; additional hours range from $1.95 to $2.95 depending on the size of your subscription package.
Web Site: **http://inngames.com/**

The oldest of the dedicated gaming services is ImagiNation Network (INN). Developed in 1990 by Sierra Online, INN lets you create a graphic online personality to approximate your own physical appearance. Among other attributes, you can define your character's sex, skin color, hair color, and hair style. It's a nice gimmick, but you have to spend online time creating a different face for each of the service's five main gaming areas. A rundown of each area indicates that INN addresses most of the popular gaming genres:

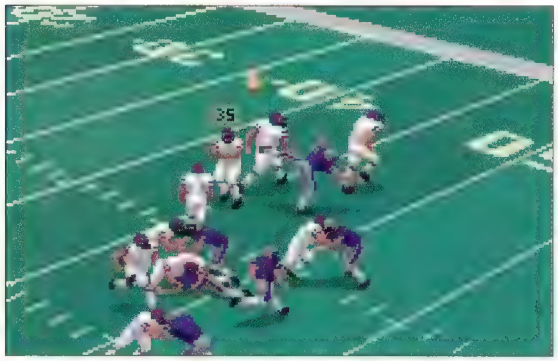
• **CasinoLand** — Described as an "adult" area and limited to players 18 years and older, CasinoLand officially prohibits the use of offensive language — but, of course, that doesn't mean you can't cuss like Joe Pesci or the Dice Man in the privacy of your own home. Sit down with virtual high rollers from Reno to Atlantic City and play fantasy, just-for-fun-sies poker, backgammon, roulette, and slots.

• **MedievaLand** — This is the domain for all you gamers who competed in sleepy-eyed, roll-the-die-till-you-drop *Dungeons and Dragons* marathons during the 70s and 80s. You'll find *Shadow of Yserbius*, *The Fate of Twinion*, and *The Ruins of Cawdor*. Generate a personalized character by picking race, class, and other specifics before joining an adventuring party, or explore virtual terrain on your own.

Thanks to three difficulty settings, even a greenhorn PC pilot can shoot down wily opponents in the ImagiNation Network's *Red Baron*.

• **SierraLand** — Here you'll find traditional arcade-style games and what INN describes as "light amusement." Check out *NTN Trivia*, *Red Baron*, *Paintball*, *Boogers*, *Yacht*, *Stratego*, and both traditional and pee-wee golf courses.

• **The Arena** — For sports and action game fanatics. Break out the Pabst and Beer Nuts, and play *Free-For-All Red Baron*, *3-D Golf*, and *Front Page Sports: Football Online*, which is the only online football game in which you can compete in real-time against opponents nationwide.



You can't control players on the field, but otherwise, the online version of *Front Page Sports: Football* on INN is true to the original.

• **The ClubHouse** — This is home to a slew of classic board and parlor games such as bridge, chess, checkers, backgammon, hearts, and spades. You'll also find chat lounges dedicated to the games found in each of the four previously described arenas.

The beauty of INN is that it employs a point-and-click interface to initiate every necessary game play command — you only need to touch the keyboard during lounge chats. To encourage a varied and voluminous selection of gaming opponents, handicapping and difficulty settings allow beginners and veterans to battle competitively in the same games. A quick glance at someone's personal profile reveals his or her skill levels in different games, which discourages seasoned pros from luring newbies into virtual slaughterhouses. Should you have trouble getting a game to run — *Front Page Sports: Football* is a little tricky — the tech support department is patient and informative, and your call is toll-free.

But you may want to wait before you sign up: INN is developing a 3D, interactive gaming environment — code-named Cyber Park — and plans to license it to online services and Internet service providers, as well as "other emerging consumer entertainment networks," including cable. It will contain more than 40 sites and buildings, a dozen games and billions of variations of 3D characters that can be customized by players. INN plans to debut Cyber Park, which will run on Windows 95, this summer.

DWANGO

Address: 105 West 72nd Street, #6B, New York, NY 10023
Phone: 713 467 8865
Pricing: $7.95 for five free hours a month; $1.55 per hour for a 40 hour block; $2.00 per hour for a 10 hour block.
Web Site: **http://www.dwango.com/**

DWANGO? Just what the hell *is* a DWANGO, anyway? A feral Australian carnivore? Nope. DWANGO is an acronym for Dial-up Wide Area Network Gaming Operation — and for gamers thirsting for intense head-to-head action, it may as well stand for nirvana.

Unlike INN, DWANGO doesn't offer original games developed in-house. Instead, it administers nationwide servers, into which users dial to play multi-player versions of *DOOM*, *DOOM II*, *The Ultimate DOOM*, *Heretic*, *Hexen — Beyond Heretic*, and *Terminal Velocity*. A new game, *NetMech*, the multi-player version of Activision's *Mech Warrior 2*, will be available in the near future.

Here's how it works: After configuring your DWANGO client software, you dial into one of 23 nationwide servers and enter a chat room, in which you meet and challenge opponents free of charge. To actually play a game, you'll need the appropriate version of each game title (the original version of *DOOM II*, for instance, won't work on DWANGO), and a modem with a 16550 UART chip (UART stands for Universal Asynchronous Receiver Transmitter).

Nothing feels quite as satisfying as leveling a chain-gun at a fellow *DOOM*er, and watching him dance the cha-cha-cha.

Once you have these prerequisites, you're ready for down-and-dirty action. Competition is currently limited to people dialed into the same server, but DWANGO plans to eventually link all 23 servers to greatly increase opponent reserves.

DWANGO's competition level is fierce. Old pros are wont to swarm through fight arenas like Green Berets, and newbies are prone to stagger around in desperation, looking for nooks and crannies in which to cower and hide. Fortunately, a "frag count" feature alerts you to who's currently the top dog online, and even getting dusted can be fun. Most importantly, response time is fantastic. DWANGO says its compression/decompression technology

results in game play as good as, or better than, you'd get on a Local Area Network (LAN). A single trip online verifies as much.

DWANGO plans to incorporate strategy, sports, and other gaming genres into its lineup, and the DWANGO 95 client software scheduled for release this year will allow any multi-player game developed with Microsoft's DirectPlay API to run on a DWANGO server. For the latest information on DWANGO servers and new games supported by DWANGO, check out the Web site.

Total Entertainment Netw

Address: 562 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA, 94105
Phone: 415 778 3500
Pricing: To be announced with launch
Web Site: **http://www.ten.net/**

Born from a merger between Planet Optigon and Outland, Total Entertainment Network, or TEN, has the potential to become the premiere online gaming service. Like DWANGO, TEN will offer a server platform on which commercially available game titles can be played.

Scheduled for a spring 1996 roll-out, TEN features client software that allows you to access its games either through your Internet service provider or through one of more than 200 TEN local dial-ups throughout the U.S. This in itself eliminates the problem of bandwidth, since most Internet providers now offer 28.8 access (more than speedy enough for multi-player gaming). And, because TEN's Internet connection offers the performance of 84 T1 lines, the network should be able to handle thousands of users simultaneously.

***Duke Nukem 3D*, the long-awaited first-person shooter from 3D Realms, is supported by TEN.**

When TEN debuts, the first games to be supported will be *CivNet* (the network version of MicroProse's classic *Civilization*), and 3D Realms' *Terminal Velocity*. *Duke Nukem 3D* (also from 3D Realms) will follow closely behind. 3D Realms has signed an agreement to publish five other games for play on TEN, including *Blood* and *Shadow Warrior*. Last September, SSI agreed to provide TEN with game content. No mention has been made of which SSI games would support TEN, but at least one will be exclusive to the service.

TEN is also aggressively pursuing other titles by making its APIs freely available to developers. Games supported by TEN will feature "Play It Online" stickers on their boxes, and will include TEN client software. Because companies that design TEN-compatible games will receive royalties based on how often their games are played on the service, chances are good that most publishers of multi-player games will make their upcoming games compatible with the service. TEN is expressly designed for gamers who get off on thrashing live opponents. The interface reflects a cool, postmodern, street-tough aesthetic, and, once the service picks up steam Internet-wise, you'll be able to send e-mail, cruise the Web, and peruse newsgroups.

CompuServe

Address: 5000 Arlington Center Blvd., Columbus, OH, 43220
Phone: 800 433 0389
Pricing: $9.95 for five free hours a month; each additional hour is $2.95. A "super value" option is also available.
Web Site: **http:/www.compuserve.com/**

Judging from CompuServe's recent dry-as-dust TV ads, one would assume the service's emphasis is *not* on fun and games. That's not to say there aren't a lot of gaming-related areas on CompuServe — the service is home to forums run by nearly all the major game developers. But when it comes to multi-player action, CompuServe is stuck in the oh-so-exciting land of ASCII. What year is this? 1989?

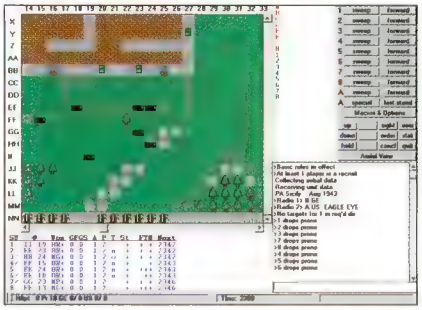
Most multi-player games on CompuServe fall into two categories — simulation and adventure — and all show signs of age and neglect. Simulations include *Air Traffic Controller* (you play the role of an underpaid, overworked employee holding the lives of thousands in your tired, shaky hands); *MegaWars* (a galactic exploration, trading, and conquest sim); and *Sniper!* (a squad-level simulation of World War II combat).

There's more to choose from in the adventure category, but a quick look at the titles gives you a good idea of what to expect: *BlackDragon*, *CastleQuest*, *Classic Adventure*, and *Enhanced Adventure* are all single-player games, though *British Legends* and *Island of Kesmai* are indeed teaming with other brave souls just like yourself.

It all sounds like an abundance of opportunities, but the problem here is that some of these games are six or seven years old. The only ones that support a graphical front end are *Air Traffic Controller*, *MegaWars*, and *Sniper!* — and that's using the phrase "graphical front end" in its loosest sense. All the adventures and role-playing games are text-based (the sims can be played in text-only mode, too), and gamers who've grown accustomed to the handsome graphics and streamlined interfaces of stand-alone graphic adventures are likely to be annoyed by all the commands they'll have to type in order to play.

Even so, games like *British Legends* and *Island of Kesmai* have legions of followers. *Sniper!* and *MegaWars* aren't as popular, but their followers also seem to be fanatics. The text-based formats eliminate the lengthy load times associated with fancier games, and when you join one of the multi-player adventures, you definitely sense a camaraderie among players. Because text consumes so little space compared to graphics, the number of possible outcomes and actions is greatly increased. A lot of the fun lies in meeting people from around the world, and joining together to undertake quests and adventures. It's almost a given that if you're not a fan of text-based games, you won't enjoy CompuServe's menu. But that could be changing very soon, thanks to WorldsAway.

A co-venture between Fujitsu Cultural Technologies and CompuServe, this cyberspace community allows users to create an online persona — dubbed an "avatar" — to explore a graphically rich visual landscape. In WorldsAway, you can live in a cyber-apartment, run a cyber-business, and meet cyber-friends. You can even collect an assortment of caricatures for your character, and choose just the right one for special occasions. Fujitsu and CompuServe call it "social computing" — but if you like meeting and talking to people online, you'll just call it an extension of life.



***Sniper!*, one of the few CompuServe games to sport a graphical front end, is a multi-player simulation of squad-level combat during World War II.**

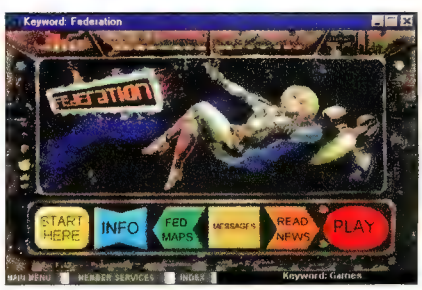
America Online

Keyword: Gaming
Address: 8619 Westwood Center Drive, Vienna, VA, 22182
Phone: 800 827 6364
Pricing: $9.95 for five free hours a month; $2.95 for each additional hour.
Web Site: **http://www.aol.com/**

Not many card-carrying members of the Internet Users Loyalty Union are fond of America Online, but when it comes to multi-player games, AOL stands head and shoulders above its arch-rival, CompuServe.

Every AOL member is familiar with the ubiquitous message, "Please wait while we download new art," and those who use the service for gaming receive this alert in double and triple doses. Fortunately, much of the time spent downloading art is free. About the only game files that cost you chargeable download time are the ones for *AD&D NeverWinter Nights* and *Rabbitjack's Casino*, and the addition of high-quality background art makes these text-based adventures more palatable.

Though *Federation* and *Gemstone III* are text-based role-playing games, they are both more accessible than CompuServe's offerings, thanks to AOL's slick interface and presentation. New users are gingerly guided through these complex worlds with



It's still a text-based game with equal portions of strategy, role-playing, and adventure, but AOL's icon-based *Federation* somehow seems like a kinder, gentler version of its GEnie cousin.

constant reminders of what commands to type in order to receive help. *Federation* boasts a capitalistic slant: You start off as an interstellar trader, and as your wealth increases, so does your status in the virtual world. *Gemstone III* is a fantasy adventure that boasts a large following — it may require more than 10 attempts to pick a screen name that hasn't already been claimed. Likewise, when you check to see how many gamers are currently playing, you'll receive a list that scrolls on and on for screen after screen. *Gemstone III* bills itself as a world of "dark dungeons, fair maidens, epic battles, arcane mysteries, evil warlocks, powerful images, and medieval politics" — traditional role-playing fare, but with so many players to befriend, the game can assume a spellbinding quality, and its virtual environment is amazingly large and detailed. The same can be said for *Modus Operandi*, a multi-player game with a film noir leaning. The game is similar to *Gemstone III* in that you generate a character by choosing among physical characteristics and professions.

A quick glance at AOL's multi-player games reveals three things: 1) There's a helluva lot more to play here than on CompuServe and Prodigy; 2) the games look good even if they're text-based; and 3) action games like *DOOM* and *Descent* are nowhere to be found. If you want to reach out and kill someone — and we're not talking about casting five fireball spells until the "orc" disappears from your screen — you'll have to look somewhere else.

Prodigy

Jump: Game Center
Address: 445 Hamilton Avenue, White Plains, NY, 10060
Phone: 800 776 3449
Pricing: $9.95 a month for five free hours; $2.95 for each additional hour. Cheaper packages are also available.
Web Site: **http://www.prodigy.com/**

Scrounge around at the bottom of the online gaming barrel, and you'll find Prodigy, where playing games is truly like a trip down memory lane. There's *AJ Dakota*, a maze game in the tradition of *Minesweeper*; trivia contests (*Guts* and *Frantic Guts*, the latter costing 50 cents a game — and the game ends if you miss a question!); *Match-It*, based on the classic *Concentration* game; *FITB*, a *Wheel of Fortune*-like game that can accommodate up to four players; an EGA version of *Carmen Sandiego*; a fantasy role-playing maze-crawl called *MadMaze* (also with EGA graphics); and *Square Off*, a numbers-and-equations challenge.

All of these "diversions" suffer from poor graphics and sound effects, but despite their spartan bells and whistles, they still play somewhat sluggishly. To add insult to injury, two games — *Frantic Guts* and *Square Off* — require you to take a quiz that proves you know the rules before you can play. This is acceptable for a game that costs money (as *Frantic Guts* does), but it's downright ridiculous to be forced to waste online time proving you know how to play a simple game like *Square Off*. Prodigy also hosts a fantasy baseball league, *Baseball Manager*, that carries the MLBPA license. It costs either $59.95 or $124.95 (depending on your package), and only runs from May to October.

Of all the Prodigy games, the only one that's played in real-time between two human opponents is *Checkers*, and Prodigy has no new games on its horizon. Maybe Prodigy doesn't think its members want multi-player games, but one thing is certain: Anyone who joins the service looking for head-to-head action won't be a member for long.

Take *Minesweeper*, toss in a few game play twists, add a lifeless background graphic, and — voila! — you've got Prodigy's *AJ Dakota and the Orb of Kings*.

GEnie

Address: 401 North Washington Street, Rockville, MD, 20850
Phone: 800 638 9636
Pricing: $8.95 a month for four free hours; $3.00 for each additional hour.
Web Site: **http://www.genie.com/**

What if you don't want to amass "Imperial Groats" in *Federation*, or couldn't care less about saving damsels in *Gemstone III*? Would you rather smoke someone with an air-to-air missile than ring in the correct answer in some highfalutin trivia game? For thousands of players, the answer is simple: GEnie.

Until the arrival of the ImagiNation Network, GEnie was the only game in town for head-to-head, fight-to-the-finish action. Sure, the network was (and still is) home to text-based adventures like *Gemstone III*, *Federation*, *Modus Operandi*, and *Island of Kesmai*. But it's the other games — *Multi-Player BattleTech*, *SVGA Air Warrior*, and *CyberStrike* — that set GEnie apart from the other services. It's all nice and friendly to meet a fellow RPGer bellowing a hearty, "Hail fellow well met," but a lot of folks get more satisfaction from chasing down scurvy dogs and blasting them with everything they've got.

And that's just your mission in *SVGA Air Warrior* — but it's not as easy as it sounds. Hardcore flight-sim fans say it's the most realistic air-combat game around, and it's these same experts who religiously flock to GEnie for doses of high-flying action. If you're only middling to fair at flight sims, chances are good you'll either stall and crash, or get mercilessly gunned down by the pros. Fortunately, you can share flight arenas with up to six other players (which means you can attempt to get lost in the crowd), and if you ask for help, most veterans are more than happy to provide hints on how to increase your chances of survival. Your best bet, however, is to log in a few hours flying single-player missions offline in order to master the complex (some might call it awkward) layout of the keyboard commands.

Enter the world of mechs. There's something about giant, heavily armed fighting robots that appeals to everyone weened on cheesy Japanese TV sci-fi adventures. In *Multi-Player Battletech*, you begin in military training and fight your way to glory, earning prestige and money to buy better vehicles and weapons as you go along. It's a decent game, but the EGA graphics (the game is about four or five years old) look... well... bad. It's a good thing GEnie introduced *CyberStrike*. Its VGA graphics, though hardly stunning, are far superior to those in *Multi-Player Battletech*, and the simplified game play facilitates a more gentle learning curve than its predecessor.

Other GEnie games include a multi-player version of *Harpoon* (unfortunately, the graphics are a little too "classic"); *Hundred Years War* (a strategic role-playing game set in the Middle Ages); *Stellar Emperor* (GEnie's own conquer-the-universe game); *Dragon's Gate* (a text-based fantasy); and *QBI* (you pick the next play to be called in a televised football game).

Clearly, GEnie is dedicated to providing plenty of multi-player action for its members, but behind all the fun and games lurks a few problems. The biggest is the question of front-end software. GEnie has created a "Game Launcher" for both DOS and Windows to accommodate its bounty of online games, but you'll still find yourself typing in your name and password ad nauseam. Because GEnie's games have different memory requirements, you might have to resort to multiple configurations, or even boot disks to get the games you like up and running — something you needn't worry about with the more simplistic games offered by the other services.

GEnie's future is unclear: Since 1992, it's always run behind AOL and CompuServe in terms of membership, and its recent acquisition by Yovelle Renaissance Corporation in Queens, New York makes it even harder to predict what we can expect to see in the future. But if things go as planned, several games will augment GEnie's current lineup: multi-player *Descent*; a first-person tank game called *Armored Assault* (currently in beta testing); and *Dragon's Tale*, the first smooth-scrolling, first-person fantasy role-playing game offered online.

Note: *While you won't always need a super-fast modem to enjoy the games mentioned in this article, speed can make a difference. If in doubt, check modem requirements for each game.*

Mastering the controls in *SVGA Air Warrior* takes time and patience, but fortunately, you can fly single-player missions at home before mixing it up with the pros on GEnie.

It's Play Time

The Net's Gaming Sites Extravaganza

Compiled by Patrick Baggatta, Wayne Cunningham, Shel Kimen, Minda Sandler, Kathy Tafel, and Crystal Waters

GAME-PLAYING SITES

Atlantis

http://www.cs.stedwards.edu/~tmendol/atlantis.html

In this "talker" game, get lost in the vanished world of Atlantis.

B.J. Zanzibar's World of Darkness

http://silver.ucs.indiana.edu/~adashiel/wod/wod.html

A role-playing game its creator describes as being a "sociopathic vision of our own world. Everything seems normal on the surface, but you don't have to dig very deep to run into something rotten."

Battle PBeM Game

http://www.ecafe.org/~battle/

Play by e-mail this abstract game of world-domination — whether by lasers and tanks, or armies and magic.

Battleship

http://csugrad.cs.vt.edu/htbin/battleship?

You sank my battleship! The classics never die, they just go virtual, or some such drivel.

Book of the Tower

http://www.riverbend.net/tower/

A chatty-type fantasy game with pretty pictures.

Choose Your Own Adventure

http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davisj/choose/first.html

Want to relive your college freshman year? Here you're presented with a scenario and some action choices, and you need to get through the day successfully with out getting kicked out of school, or getting killed.

Crossword for the Web

http://virtumall.com/cgi-bin/crossword

To play this fully interactive crossword puzzle, you must have a browser that supports tables and forms.

CyberSlots

http://www.cyberact.com/cyberslots/

Five different themes to choose from — including Fish, which you won't find in the casinos.

Diplomacy

http://www.infersys.com/diplomacy/

In this ongoing game played over the Internet (primarily via e-mail), a network of players ally themselves with each other and attempt to take over the world.

Docking Bay

http://www.csd.uu.se/~johnn/index.shtml

Space version of the classic Web maze game. Although beamed in from Sweden, it's pretty fast.

Doronomo Casino

http://www.linnet.com/~dkramarc/casino/casino.html

Armed with $500 and unfettered by the noise and crowds of the Vegas casinos, you can go to town with blackjack, craps, roulette, a slot machine, and video poker.

Dr. Fellowbug's Laboratory of Fun & Horror

http://www.dtd.com/bug/

This somewhat notorious site pioneered the hangman game on the Web, but the Excuse Generator is also totally cool.

Duck Hunt

http://aurora.york.ac.uk/ducks.html

It's similar to *Where's Waldo*, except it uses ducks and clickable image maps.

Ferret Frenzy

http://www.delphi.co.uk/delphi/interactive/ferrets/intro.html

How good of an eye do you have for a fast ferret? Pick one and place your bet. Excitement!

Forest Web Page

http://ftoomsh.progsoc.uts.edu.au/forest/

Another chat type fantasy game on the Web; this one is, you guessed it, set in a forest and based in the Medieval period. Shocker.

Fruit Game

http://www.2020tech.com/fruit/

Silly but entertaining: Take turns with the computer removing fruit from the table. If you take the last fruit, you're a loser.

Heineken Quest

http://www.heineken.nl/game/

Lengthy (and we mean lengthy) world travel, find-the-bottle-of-beer game sponsored by the good folks at Heineken.

Hunt the Wumpus

http://www.bu.edu/htbin/wcl

Find the wumpus monster, which lives in a cave and wants to eat you.

Internet Slot Machine

http://www.datawave.net/cgi-bin/leverpull

You may never win, but it is captivating.

Labyrinth

http://www.new3.com/labyrinth/

As Web mazes go, this one is well-constructed and fairly nice to look at. If you complete the maze in the least amount of moves, you could win a prize!

Lite Board

http://asylum.cid.com/lb/lb.html

Light Bright, making things with light. What a sight, making things with Light Bright.

Madlib

http://www.ii.uib.no/~tor/cgi/madlib.html

Remember those way cool books? Now you can do it online. It is super RAD.

Match 23

http://www.gold.net/users/fj17/index.htm

This classic game starts with 23 matches; each player takes turn removing matches. The object is to *not* be the one to remove the last match.

Netropolis

http://www.delphi.co.uk/netropolis/

An incredibly intricate multi-player game similar to *Monopoly* and *SimCity*... SimBiz?

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Finding Cheats Online

If there's one thing a die-hard gamer enjoys more than mastering a game, it's finding the short-cuts through it. This is fine for those with extra time on their hands, but for the rest of the gaming community, it leaves something to be desired.

But the net, with its up-to-the-minute nature, has incredibly simplified the process of finding game cheats. In the past, gamers could find cheats in print magazines, but usually only a few pages would be devoted to the subject, and often that one game you were striving to master wouldn't be included. Now you have the luxury of finding the answers you want online.

In general, newsgroups are the best places to find hints and cheats. Here you'll find many of the codes that aren't yet being posted on the corporate sites. In fact, these are the codes that people are literally figuring out on their own. Of course, the best thing about searching for codes on newsgroups is that you can make specific requests for codes. Most news servers will provide what you're looking for by way of codes. For example, the Zippo news server has groups such as **rec.games.video.nintendo**, **rec.games.video.sega**, **rec.games.video.atari**, **rec.games.video.sony-playstation** – and so on and so forth – all of which have quite a bit of information on game cheats.

Corporate Web sites often aren't a bad place to search either, but it's the gamers – not the manufacturers – who are most eager to share the secret access points in a game. Another good place to check for cheats is in gaming e-zines.

Oftentimes, whole sections of the publication will be devoted specifically to cheats. See pages 47-48 for a list of good Web-based gaming cheats.

Newsgroups

rec.games.video

General news concerning video games. Not too much here.

rec.games.video.arcade

Exchange thoughts about all the latest arcade games. Find out new information on upcoming games. Lots of rumors.

rec.games.video.atari

Find out what's going on with Atari and the Jaguar.

rec.games.video.marketplace

Buy, sell, and trade video game software. This is an awesome resource for trading in cyberspace.

rec.games.video.nintendo

Information concerning Super Nintendo, Nintendo 64, and plenty of Nintendo software. There are plenty of tips and tricks on Nintendo games, as well.

rec.games.video.sega

Tons of news, gossip, and opinions on Sega. Also quite a few tips and tricks for Sega games.

rec.games.video.sony

Plenty of new PlayStation owners talking about their new systems. Tips and tricks for PlayStation games.

rec.video.3do

Chat about 3DO hardware and software.

Online Services

America Online

Keyword: Gaming

Searching for gaming information on America Online may not be the most fruitful of ventures, however, there is some pretty useful information if you know where to look.

For example if you're interested in finding gaming cheats, you could check out the many FAQs and tips listed under headings for some of the hottest gaming hardware on the market.

CompuServe

GO: Gaming

The best way to find cheats on CompuServe is to check out the individual genre forums. If strategy games are your thing, you're likely to find like-minded people eager to share cheats and tips on games falling within that genre.

Overall, though, finding cheats on CompuServe is a little more work than required on most other sites and services.

Prodigy

Jump: Game Center

Finding cheats on Prodigy is a simple but potentially unrewarding affair. Prodigy focuses mostly on PC titles, with computer gaming publication Computer Gaming World running the hints site, so its angle is pretty easy to guess.

In the end, Prodigy is not a bad place for finding PC tips and tricks, but there's really not much else here.

– Patrick Baggatta

The People Behind the Plays

by Trent Ward

Many programmers, like Bullfrog's Peter Molineux and MicroProse's Sid Meier, are now well-known throughout the games industry for creating and implementing fantastic Artificial Intelligence (AI) routines for single-player games. But a new set of programmers specializing in multi-player AI are gaining attention for their efforts. These developers are creating better and faster AI routines so that they can develop worlds that enhance the creative atmosphere in which players can compete (or cooperate) through details that seem more lifelike and intuitive.

We've tracked down three of today's high-profile multi-player game designers, and asked them about the importance of intelligence algorithms in online gaming, how they go about creating them, and where they see the future heading. Although their respective games may seem very different in their final forms, the concepts of these cutting-edge designers are surprisingly similar.

Confirmed Kill: A World of Chaotic Ground War

Domark's Bryan Walker, one of the brains behind the company's *Confirmed Kill* multi-player flight simulator (http://www.domark.com/ck/ck.html), was faced with the problem of creating a world in which all of the chaotic ground activity of war is boiled down into algorithms fast enough to let online players compete without slowdown. The game also had to be flexible enough to let hundreds of players change the outcome of individual conflicts, and so realistic that it would allow players to suspend disbelief.

A long-time programmer of standard flight games, Walker explains why creating such a system was even more important in a multi-player format: "Though playing against human opponents is the most appealing part of the online experience, the need for quality artificial intelligence is still there. Any attempt at a virtual battlefield or environment has to employ solid AI to react intelligently on both the tactical and strategic scale. Computer game players are a sharp bunch, and they pick up on flimsy AI in a hurry."

Not only is it a great online battle title, *Confirmed Kill* also shows off amazingly sophisticated AI algorithms.

In the past, many programmers attempting to program multi-player games discovered that any inherent flaws in the games were quickly picked up by players and used to their advantage. Walker sites one example: "If bombing Bridge A causes Base B to always send out three trucks to repair the bridge, then you can bet that players will have that routine sussed out in less than a day. The AI we're using is a bit different. Its neural network will learn and experiment with a number of reactions to give 'negative stimuli,' such as the bombing of Bridge A. In our system, if Player A bombs Bridge A while Player B circles Base B anticipating ►

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Petercat's Maze of Treasures

http://web.syr.edu/~pjkappes/maze/index.html

A joke maze, where the "treasures" are links to nifty Web things. Petercat assures there is an exit.

Phlong

http://www.delphi.co.uk/delphi/interactive/phlong/Phlong_title.html

Search for the secret of Phlong, a huge, pink stone discovered by the Incas.

Piercing Mildred

http://streams.com/pierce/

Here's the perfect game for those of us who are entertained by the pierced multitudes walking the streets of America's cities. And you can win real prizes for the best piercing and scarification.

Puzzle Depot Home Page

http://iquest.com/~pinnacle/

Find puzzles of all kinds.

Reinventing America

http://pathfinder.com/@@gphXyhEjlAMAQNVd/reinventing/

Answer surveys and generally voice opinions on real issues facing America.

Roshambot

http://chappie.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/roshambot

Online version of rock, paper, scissors, but the computer doesn't get to hit you if you lose.

Space Pirate

http://www2.csn.net/~rosenz/pirate.html

If you've got the Shockwave plug-in for Netscape, take a shot at the next generation of Web games.

Speedbump

http://www.sandbox.net/mines/pub-doc/speedbump.html

Played *Minesweeper*? Speedbump's the same thing, except it's about a pizza delivery agent avoiding obstacles.

Towers of Hanoi

http://www.chaco.com/~glenn/hanoi/

Shock a monk and end the world, according to the strategic plan for this Zen-oriented Web game.

Wacky WWW Adventure

http://ugweb.cs.ualberta.ca/~hubick/adventure/adventure.cgi

In this interactive story, you find yourself walking out your front door and faced with tons of choices about what to do next. Users can add their own choices.

Web-a-Sketch

http://www.digitalstuff.com/web-a-sketch/

Relive the joys of childhood (if you aren't a child) with this Web version of the ultimate drawing board.

Who Can It Be Now?

http://www.80s.com/who.html

Guess the 1980s band from its picture. Clue: Simon Le Bon's hair is all freaky.

WHIMSY

http://monet.uwaterloo.ca/john/whimsy/start.htm

Another MUDdy, MOOey type game. Text-based and kind of fun, but be sure to visit only between midnight and 8 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

WWW Spirograph

http://juniper.tc.cornell.edu:8000/spiro/spiro.html

A lot of Web authors must be part of the 70s generation, since here's yet another Web version of a toy from that era.

Yahtzee on the Web

http://www.cs.fsu.edu/~kalter/yahtzee.html

Veteran dice game with a Web interface. As an option, do shots of milk if you lose.

CHEATS, TIPS, INFO, RESOURCES

Andy Eddy's Video Game FAQs

http://rat.org/vidgames/

If you're searching for an extensive list of game FAQs, go here. With secret information on game for all the major and some of the minor hardware platforms, this extensive, constantly growing site is stuffed with tips and tricks.

BTech Hangout

http://www.nada.kth.se/~d93-jbo/index.html

Are you a fan of BattleTech, a futuristic role-playing game? Here's a good place to go to talk with other fans about their BattleTech ways.

Cheat Machine

http://www.sliceoflife.com/official/Aforest/CM.HTM

Boasting more than 500 cheats for the PC, this site is likely to have something that makes you happy.

Chess Connection

http://www.easynet.co.uk/worldchess/home.htm

Chess fans will find chess columns from various British publications, game strategies, and a shop, though there's no online archive.

Game Links

http://forum.swarthmore.edu/~jay/learn-game/game-links.html

A collection of links to games the creator thinks "are interesting or fun for machine learning."

Game Zero

http://www.primenet.com/team-0/

This thorough site lets you search by hardware platform — from Atari Jaguar to Sega — through an extensive archive of codes for a slightly dated but pretty good collection of gaming cheats.

Gamer's Zone

http://www.worldvillage.com/wv/gamezone/html/gamezone.htm

This resource site gives you info on PC and Mac game publishers, plus demos, reviews, patches, cheats and hints, ratings, and more.

Games Domain

http://www.gamesdomain.co.uk

Perhaps the most popular and effective gaming site on the net, this covers it all, from hot gaming news to an extensive list of game cheats and codes. Whether you're looking for game FAQs, play tips, or complete walk-throughs, this is your place for one-stop shopping. ▶

the three defenseless trucks that came out last time, someone's in for a surprise."

Interactive Magic: Entertainment Ensured

Interactive Magic's Jeff Kiel, one of the developers of the new online version of *Air Warrior* (http://www.imagicgames.com/future/air_warriorII/airwar_II.html), also sees AI as a way to ensure that players get an entertaining game no matter what time of day they log onto a system. This is a far cry from the early days of online gaming, when players were forced to play at a certain peak times if they wanted a challenge.

When asked about the improvement of online AI in the past year, Jeff said: "The original online games didn't have any AI to speak of. They were usually [using] exclusively human players, had very basic drones [such as Xtrek, an online-based role-playing battle game; see http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/jch/netrek/ for more info], or they were classic games with computer players running rule-based decision trees (such as chess, card games, etc.). With the commercialization of online gaming through services like Prodigy, AOL, GEnie, etc., content providers saw that some sort of real-life computer substitute was needed to make game play viable at any hour of the day."

Kiel's approach to designing these algorithms sounds simple, but it mirrors the efforts of every programmer to tackle the challenge: "The key to designing effective AI is to make it think like a human player thinks." Kiel adds: "In a chess game, there are a limited set of rules (how the pieces move, capturing, etc.) and a known set of moves (opening moves, end game strategies). The software uses a combination of these built-in elements and the ability to quickly look ahead a number of moves to make its decisions. What the computer lacks in abstract thinking and quick connection-making (like in the synapses of the brain), it makes up for in its superior pattern matching, infallible memory, and lack of fear. While this can make for a chess champion with a rating in the top 2,000 of the world, it doesn't work well in a socioeconomic strategy game."

The design teams are tackling this problem in their latest project, *Destiny*, by creating AIs with different personalities that will have some inherent flaws and patterns to their thinking, just as humans do. In this way, developers are creating opponents to challenge players that can be studied and then predicted as a human player can.

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Air Warrior: High-speed combat for those who aren't afraid to put their piloting skills to the test.

CivNet lets strategy fans compete online, or on their own local networks.

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MicroProse: Simultaneous Play Constraints

The team that put together MicroProse's online version of *Civilization*, *CivNet* (http://www.microprose.com/civnet/), had the advantage of working on a system that had been tested in a single-player release, but it needed to create a system that worked well within the unique strains that simultaneous play puts on a turn-based game. Paul Rowan, the lead programmer on the game, explains: "As a development group, we spent an enormous amount of time trying to understand how the AI worked in the original *Civilization*, and how we could make sure that the AI would work the same way in a multi-player environment. We tested it first as a single-player game to scrutinize the AI."

The main goal of the team at this point was to create computer opponents that could compete alongside human opponents in a human-like fashion. "If you are playing against another human, and you can't tell if your current opponent is the computer AI or another player, then the development team succeeded in creating solid AI," says William Denman, *CivNet*'s producer. By adding a few more tricks, the team was also able to use the controllability of computer intelligences to add balance to the game. Rowan explains: "As an equalization mechanism in *CivNet*, the AI picks the top human player, and in certain situations, the AI players gang up on the top human. This prevents any single player from becoming too powerful too fast."

These designers are paving the way for the next decade's most important area of game design. The use of computer rather than human situational control not only reduces the cost of running an online system (both in terms of dollars and man-hours), it also creates a world that is truly fair and equally challenging to all players. This is the true future of gaming.

Grendel's Gaming Lair Main

http://www.csra.net/jononkeyz/games/gaming.htm

Find tips, tricks, and cheats, not to mention downloadable game demos, all of it geared to lovers of PC games.

Happy Puppy Games

http://happypuppy.com/games/faqcht/discwcht.htm

A great place to find mostly cheats for PC games, Happy Puppy Games contains an extensive list of FAQs, editors, patches, and cheats. There's also a chat group feature available at the site, giving you an additional opportunity to ask for specific help.

Home Of Virtua Fighter 2

http://www.w3masters.com/vfhome/vfhome.htm

Fans' love of the game spawned this site, which is replete with playing tips, secret codes, and historical lore. You'll find no corporate advertising masking as content here.

Intelligent Gamer OnLine

http://igonline.escape.com/

Can't sleep for curiosity over what's going on behind closed doors at Nintendo HQ or which deals are being signed by Sega? Find accurate, timely, late-breaking news on the video games industry here.

maddog's studio

http://www.best.com/~maddog/

This "information mothership" focuses on networked multiuser interactive entertainment — find Internet games, 3D graphics libraries, sources to code, product demos, info on companies and people, and lots more.

Myst Hint Guide

http://www.astro.washington.edu/ingram/myst/index.html

While it doesn't give away too much of the game, this guide site definitely offers hints — but no walk-throughs.

Paintball West Home Page

http://www.hooked.net/users/mbelew/home.html

This online paintball magazine includes product reviews, "expert" articles on such topics as how to anodize your gun, information for new players, and U.S. and international field listings.

Paolo Marcucci's Shadowrun Archive

http://www.interware.it/users/paolo/sr2/index.html

This archive for the role-playing game Shadowrun, set in a cyberpunk future, has pages and pages of information and resources.

Pinball Archive

http://pinball.cc.cmu.edu/

Closely related to the newsgroup rec.games.pinball, this Web site contains rule sheets and a listing of easter eggs hidden in various games.

Virtua Fighter II Page

http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~grace/vf2.html

Good FAQs on individual characters, and nice move lists here.

Wacky Hexen Page

http://www.zensoft.com/Raven/Hexen.html

Hexen information abounds here. There's a very nicely formatted set of cheat codes, and even a set of recipes that were somehow extracted from the game. ▶

You Don't Have to Just Watch TV: A Look at Sega Channel

For an average of $13–$15 a month, game lovers in more than 200 cities across the U.S. and Canada can play video games on demand on their TVs, 24 hours a day. Sound pretty good? That's what the creators of the Sega Channel (http://www.segaoa.com/products/channel/; for information, call 402 573 3637), a cable video game channel, are hoping you'll say. The channel was created by Sega in partnership with TeleCommunications Inc. and Time Warner Entertainment Company. Providing unlimited online access to nearly 50 games each month for use on the 16-bit Sega Genesis, the Sega Channel works via satellite broadcasts and a special adapter obtained through a user's local cable operator.

Besides gaining access to Sega's extensive games library, users get a chance to cash in on some great prizes that are part of promotions for blockbuster titles like Earthworm Jim, Mortal Kombat 3, and Triple Play Baseball. Other benefits of the service include special game tips, playable previews of upcoming releases, and video game news updates.

Warp Speed Ahead

The Sega Channel has some important advantages over both the more traditional and the newer online gaming services. The main benefit Sega offers users is faster data transfer speed. Also, the barriers to becoming a Sega Channel user are much lower: Where gamers indulging their pleasure on the Internet need to have a certain level of computer savvy as well as a significant amount of hardware, users of the Sega Channel only require a television, an inexpensive gaming system, and cable service. One potential advantage for Sega long-term is that by using the Sega name, it's attracting a much younger audience than traditionally have played online games, and in the process, it's acclimating them to the idea of online gaming via more complex systems.

But the Sega Channel isn't really directly competing with Internet gaming, since gamers have a strong distinction between computer and video gaming. Although the last few years have shown more crossover than ever before, there's still a sharp contrast between the quality of dedicated gaming consoles and the computer experience.

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AND ON THE 8TH DAY, HE SPLIT TO MAUI, AND LEFT YOU IN CHARGE.
Don't forget to feed the fish.
Build and manage two planes, heaven and hell, simultaneously.
Keep souls happy by providing them with the rewards and punishments they expect, like Dreamadise.
Disasters include Disco Inferno (pictured), Hell in a Handbasket and Heaven Nose.
INTRODUCING Afterlife.™ THE LAST WORD IN SIMS.
AFTERLIFE
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Online Gaming Explained: Two Ways to Play

If you've never played a game online, the concept may be a bit confusing. Basically, there are two key types of online games: **remotely played games**, and those **you play off of your own system**.

In the first kind, you sign into a service, enter a gaming area, and play with whatever controls come up on your screen for that game. These types of games have the tendency to be slow — or, at the very least, limited in performance by the speed of your modem connection.

The second way of playing is to download the software for a particular game. This means that the memory-hungry actions, like flying a plane over a detailed landscape, are taken care of on your system. In other words, the game itself is running off of your hard drive, rather than running off of a server far away. Needless to say, if you're running an application of any kind from your own hard drive, everything moves faster — because the only information that's being sent back and forth are the commands, not the graphic images, sound effects, and motion. If I move a chess piece on my screen, it moves on my screen, and the command is sent to the server about the placement. I don't have to wait for the server to send back an updated screen with a new drawing of a chess board. (If you've played a Web page-based game, you already know this frustration: You make your play, and then hit a "send" button, which sends your answer or move to the Web server; then you have to wait for the page to redraw with the proper answer, move, or whathaveyou. Yawn.)

The newest type of online gaming — which is making game companies wet their pants — involves taking top-selling games and making them online-compatible. Services like TEN (see page 42) are developing code to be added to popular existing games; this code will allow the games to be played over a modem. This means that if you and I both have these versions DOOM or Marathon, and we sign onto TEN, we'll have all the pleasure of fast running, shooting, and killing onscreen, plus stereo music and sound effects. We'll also get to destroy other people far away. If I move behind a wall, that information is transmitted to those who are around me, just as their position is transferred to me.

But the game speed itself is dependent on my computer, not my modem, since so little actual information has to be swapped.

— Crystal Waters

...continued from page 48

Sega Channel: The Revolution Hasn't Arrived Yet

With the Sega Channel's obvious benefits over online gaming via the Internet, it's surprising that the service is not revolutionizing the industry. But this may have to do with the very nature of online gaming. Though online gaming offers a variety of gaming opportunities, it takes away from the player's experience of ownership. Sure, it's nice to be able to call on a vast library of titles at any time, but when the game is over, it goes back to the cable company. To some players, this is a difference that matters.

Still, with games for most systems (including the Sega Genesis) costing more than $60, it's likely that the Sega Channel will continue to attract subscribers through its affordable rates and the wide variety of game choices it offers. At the moment, there are no other systems exactly like the Sega Channel in the U.S., but it's likely that as the technology becomes more commonplace, we'll see other gaming companies getting in on the cable channel action as a means to introduce gamers to the online experience.

— Patrick Baggatta

GAMING MAGAZINES ONLINE

Coming Soon Magazine
http://www.megatoon.com/~t15/
Coming Soon's site features PC, 3DO, Sega Saturn, Sony Playstation, and Sega Genesis previews and reviews, as well as cheats, hints, and stories from its print issues.

Games Online
http://www.magicnet.net/~postman/games_online/
If you can get past the gaudy graphics, Games Online serves up tons of reviews and features on a variety of gaming platforms.

Game Players
http://www.imagine-inc.com/gp/
Covering Sega, Nintendo, Sony, 3DO, Atari, and arcade platforms, Game Players' site is a wacky companion to the wacky print publication — full of reviews, news, cheats, and observations.

New Type Gaming
http://www.newtype.com/NewType/
A slick gaming magazine site that, at press time, was still under major construction. However, there are lots of game reviews, as well as links to gaming companies online.

Next Generation
http://www.imagine-inc.com/ng/
Featuring a daily news feed, hard-hitting reviews, features, commentary, and a gaming message board, Next Generation's site covers Playstation, Saturn, 3DO, Ultra 64, PC CD-ROM, 32X, Jaguar, arcade, and online platforms.

PC Gamer
http://www.peeceegee.com
Get hardhitting reviews from "the world's best-selling PC and CD-ROM games magazine."

Video Gaming Hypermag
http://www.vgh.com/
A well-organized site full of codes, reviews, and reader feedback.

GAMING COMPANY SITES

Electronic Arts
http://www.ea.com/
This bright and colorful Web site is a fair demonstration of why Electronic Arts' been on top for so long — it offers a visually stimulating presentation. Find news on EA's sports line (the division that made EA famous, with titles like Madden Football and the NHL series) and up-to-date information on sister companies like Bullfrog (developer of the PC favorite Magic Carpet).

Nintendo
http://www.nintendo.com/
The company whose name is synonymous with video games has released a next-generation gaming machine, the Ultra 64, but its Web site is much less electrifying than you'd expect. Visitors can choose a graphical version of the page, but first, they're greeted with a full page of text likely to leave them wondering if they're on the right site. Once you dig into the site, though, it's extensively packed with pictures of upcoming Ultra 64 games and news about the company.

Sega
http://www.segoa.com/
One of the biggest names in the gaming market has a well-rounded and useful place on the Web. And though it lacks splashiness or excitement, it uses a straightforward and clean-looking manner to give you plenty of info, including an extensive list of press releases and screen shots of upcoming titles.

Sony
http://www.sepc.sony.com/playstation
The newest member of the games industry has taken a slightly more corporate approach than many would have expected after seeing Sony's cutting-edge advertising campaign. It's simple to the point of being cold and somewhat uninviting, but if you're looking for information on Sony games or a (kind of slow) interactive graphic adventure, then you've come to the right place.

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"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean -neither more nor less."
--Lewis Carroll

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The Net's Lexicon

AI: Artificial Intelligence. A set of computer instructions or algorithms designed to simulate the actions of an intelligent being (or at least a human).

API: Application Programming Interface. This is an interface to someone else's code framework. For instance, programmers writing plug-ins for Navigator use Netscape's API to build their plug-ins. APIs allow the third-party developer to take advantage of services offered by the host program, obviating the need to reinvent the wheel.

ASCII: American Standard Code for Information Interchange. ASCII text files can be read by Unix, Windows, and Macintosh machines, making them ideal for transferring data between platforms.

Avatar: Derived from Hindu mythology, "avatar" is a deity who has descended to earth and assumed a human form. First seen in cyberpunk thrillers, this term now refers to a persona that you can assume within an online community.

Bandwidth: A measurement of how many bits of information can be transmitted at a given time.

Baud: Measurement of the data transmission speed of a telephone or network.

BBS: Bulletin Board System. A dial- or Telnet-in computer that usually provides e-mail, file archives, live chats, and other services and activities. Many are now connected to the Internet.

BPS: Bits Per Second. Term used to indicate the measurement of the speed at which data can be transmitted over a telephone or network line.

Browser: An application that lets you access World Wide Web pages. Most browsers now provide the capability to view Web pages with graphics, copy and print material from the Web, and download files over the Web.

Cheats: Codes or tricks programmed into a game to give the player special abilities, like invulnerability or extra weapons. Many sites on the Web list cheats for games.

Client/Server: A relationship between programs running on separate machines in a computer network. The server is a provider of services, and the client is a consumer of services. Servers provide a shared resource that can service many clients at the same time, and the server controls access to these shared services. For example, an Internet Service Provider user is a client to the ISP's server, which is "serving" other customers.

Debabelizer: A software package by Equilibrium (http://www.equilibrium.com/) that converts graphics files from one format to another.

Director: Probably the most popular multimedia authoring tool for both Mac and Windows platforms. Director's a product of Macromedia (http://www.macromedia.com/).

Domain Name: The name that's to the right of the @ sign in an Internet e-mail address. Domain names also map a machine to a specific IP address, making it easier for us poor humans to remember locations of Web, FTP, and Gopher servers.

EGA: Extended Graphics Architecture. An ancient replacement standard for PC video displays, offering 16 colors.

Eudora: An easy-to-use e-mail program that is available for Windows and Mac machines in both shareware and commercial versions. Find out more at http://www.qualcomm.com/quest/.

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions. A list of questions and answers related to a particular topic. FAQ lists help to keep newsgroup discussions from being overrun by common user questions. Usenet FAQs are archived at ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/.

FTP: File Transfer Protocol. An Internet protocol that lets users remotely upload, view, and download files on other computers.

GIF: Graphic Interchange Format. A bit-mapped color graphics file format. GIFs are popular because they employ an efficient compression method.

GIF89: Also known as Transparent GIF. A superset of the original GIF format. It allows an image to have one color that is designated as transparent to allow a background color image to show through.

Gopher: A browsing and searching system that lets you find and retrieve text and files.

HTML: Hypertext Markup Language. The standard for writing text files that can be interpreted by World Wide Web browsers.

HTTP: Hypertext Transfer Protocol. The protocol that Web servers use to communicate with browsers.

Icon: A small abstract graphic representation of an object or idea.

IRC: Internet Relay Chat. The Internet's version of CB radio, IRC lets you join a channel and converse with other folks on the same channel in real time. Channels are focused on specific topics of discussion.

ISDN: Integrated Services Digital Network. A high-speed digital line. It transmits data faster than a 28.8 K modem can across a standard (analog) phone line.

ISP: Internet Service Provider. A company that provides access to the Internet.

Java (http://java.sun.com/): An object-oriented programming language created by Sun Microsystems that adds interactive objects to Web sites.

JPEG: Joint Photographic Experts Group. A compression technique that can reduce the size of a graphic file by as much as 96 percent. It offers one of the best compression-to-quality ratios available, but is best used for photographs rather than flat images.

Keyword: A word by which subjects can be searched.

Link: A word or phrase emphasized in a hypertext document that acts as a pointer to related information. Links are generally underlined and may appear in a different color.

LAN: Local Area Network. A network that connects computers in a small area (like a room, building, or set of buildings).

LISTSERV: A software program for setting up and maintaining discussion groups via e-mail.

Megabyte: (MB) A million bytes. A measure of memory storage capacity.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface): A standard that lets electronic musical devices communicate with each other. Music stored in MIDI format contains instructions for playing the music rather than the digitized music itself; this drastically lowers storage requirements.

MIME: Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension. An extension to e-mail that lets you transmit non-text data like graphics, audio, video.

Modem: This device converts digital computer signals into analog signals, so that computers can send data over phone lines to other computers.

MOO: MUDs Object-Oriented. A text-based virtual environment.

MPEG: Moving Pictures Experts Group. A standard for compressing full-motion video.

MUD: Multi-User Dungeon. A real-time Internet role-playing game where users can adopt aliases and participate in adventures and combat. Any number of players can be on a MUD site at once. Many MUDs are now also used as conferencing tools and educa-

tional aids.

Netscape Extensions: Additions to the HTML spec that work with Netscape's Web browser. For example, Tables were a Netscape extension before they were voted into being included in the HTML 3.0 standard. Find out more about Netscape and its Navigator browser at http://home.netscape.com/.

Network games: Multi-player games that run simultaneously on many computers or consoles and are networked together, either locally or remotely (generally through a direct modem connection, the Internet, or an online service). Network games let you play against other people, rather than solely against a computer.

Newsgroups: Subject-specific discussion forums. Unlike mailing lists, which deliver postings to your e-mail box, newsgroups have to be visited in order for you to see postings.

Photoshop: The premier graphic manipulation software from Adobe (http://www.adobe.com/).

Pixel: A unit of measurement by which graphics on screen are defined.

Role-playing Game (RPG): Games in which players pretend to be a particular character in a game, and play out that role throughout the gaming environment, and in interaction with other players and non-player characters.

Router: A specialized computer that runs any of several different protocols to direct information packets from one network segment to another. Routers glue together all the little bits of network into a great whole.

Shareware: Software that's made available with a "try before you buy" strategy. If you download and use it, you're expected to pay the shareware fee. It's based on the honor system.

Simulation: Sim. A game that attempt to recreate, with as much detail and realism as possible, any "real" activity.

SLIP/PPP: Serial Line Internet Protocol/ Point-to-Point Protocol. Communications protocols used over serial lines to support Internet connectivity.

TCP/IP: Transport Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. The protocol suite that makes Telnet, FTP, e-mail, and other services possible among computers that don't belong to the same network.

Telnet: One of the TCP/IP applications, it lets you log in to computers attached to the Internet.

Turing Test: Named after Alan Turing, the computer pioneer, this is a test in artificial intelligence. If a computer program can successfully convince a human that it is human, we can theoretically conclude the AI is actually intelligent.

URL: Uniform Resource Locator. Describes the location and access method of a resource on the Internet. For example, all public Web sites have URLs.

Usenet: A network for distributing news items; originally set up in 1979 with Duke University as the central hub. This makes up what we also refer to simply as "newsgroups."

VGA: Video Graphics Array. A PC graphics card standard that offers 256 colors.

WAN: Wide Area Network. A network that connects computers over a large geographic area.

wav: Windows sound files.

Special thanks to The Net's sibling, Next Generation, *for many of the gaming-related definitions! Check out the Next Gen site at* http://www.imagine-inc.com/ng/

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Web Site Deconstruction

Word: Portrait of an Online Magazine

by Lynda Weinman

Word has been successfully broken perceived boundaries in Web design since its inception, and has caught notice from media watchers for its mix of funky stories, cool images, and excellent use of icons to help visitors navigate the site.

We all know that publishing on the Web is different from publishing on paper. Web pages contain documents and images that link to other places; they can include sounds and animations; and they run scripts that do everything from counting how many people visit the site to creating databases. To publish online, you don't need time-consuming and expensive four-color separations, nor do you have to wait for printing plates, page proofs, magazine assembly, or mailing time delays. So the Web appears to offer the perfect medium for magazine publishing.

But wait a minute. There are all kinds of complex issues that crop up when you produce a magazine online, such as how to incorporate sponsors and advertisers, keep readers coming back every week (or every day), and attract and keep contributors of information and visual content. One of the most successful examples of an online magazine dealing creatively with these challenges is Word (**http://www.word.com**).

Word has been catching the attention of media watchers since its inception: A sneak preview of Word was published in *Interactive Age* magazine before the first issue even went online in June 1995. Creative Director Jaime Levy submitted the prototype opening screen design to the magazine; it included a white background, custom alignment, and edgy graphics. Covering the sneak preview, Hotwired's (**http://www.hotwired.com/**) Flux column criticized the design for not being accessible to all browsers, as well as for being an impossible design to achieve within HTML standards. Levy was unfazed, and she's never waivered from her intention of creating a design-driven magazine that is not ruled by such considerations or by design conservatism.

The Birth of Word

Word was conceived by Dan Pelson and Tom Livacarri, who were both already heavily involved in networking and technology-related fields when they came up with the concept. Dan was responsible for evangelizing the use of interactive technologies to the media industry for Sun Microsystems (which makes the computer used most frequently as a Web server), while Tom was in sales and product development for CompuServe. A publishing effort like Word was a natural extension of their existing interests and experience.

After lining up funding for Word from ICon CMT Corp. (a communications, media, and technology company headquartered in New York City), the partners' next mission was to find a visual designer. Pelson and Lavaccari placed an ad in *The New York Times* that caught the eye of Jaime Levy, who had five self-published electronic zines called Electronic Hollywood under her belt, and was working as an interface designer for IBM. Levy was hired as Creative Director for Word, and has been filling Word's pages with original, innovative visual content ever since.

Corporate Backing, Even Trafficking

Word has never had any pretense of being anything but a commercial venture. It is one of the few sites on the Web that is fully funded through corporate sponsors (paying $20,000 a month for the privilege), the likes of which most ad agencies would drool over: Netscape, Zima, and Saab, to name a few. Each of Word's sections contain different types of stories, and each independent section – Habit, Money, GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage Out), Travel, Machine, Work, Place, Desire – is sponsored by a different company. Early on, the creators of Word discovered that visitors tended to spend the most time in the sections located at the top of the opening screen. To get an even amount of traffic, Levy and Word's art director, Yoshi Sodeoka, invented a pre-programmed, rotating icon bar that represents story sections. This allows each sponsored area to be at the top of the first page for the same amount of time each day. Once a section's icon is clicked on, the associated advertiser's logo and hotlink to its site is flashed for a few seconds, then entry is granted into the department requested. This is accomplished with the **<Meta>** tag command (otherwise known as client pull, see *The Net*, Oct. 96, pages 66-69, or **http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/back/1095/design.html**).

Putting Word Together

Levy works with artists on the Word site via e-mail, and often spends eight to 10 hours a day online, orchestrating art direction to a staff of designers on a global level. All of the artists who work under her direction know HTML and create both the design and the code. However, Levy says she doesn't hire an artist based on HTML skills alone – the artist must combine a proven design ability with HTML acumen. Levy notes: "HTML can be learned in a few hours; good design takes years to learn." There are art directors on staff at Word who tweak the code and add CGI scripts, but most of the coding is done first by each individual story designer.

Word's Design Guidelines

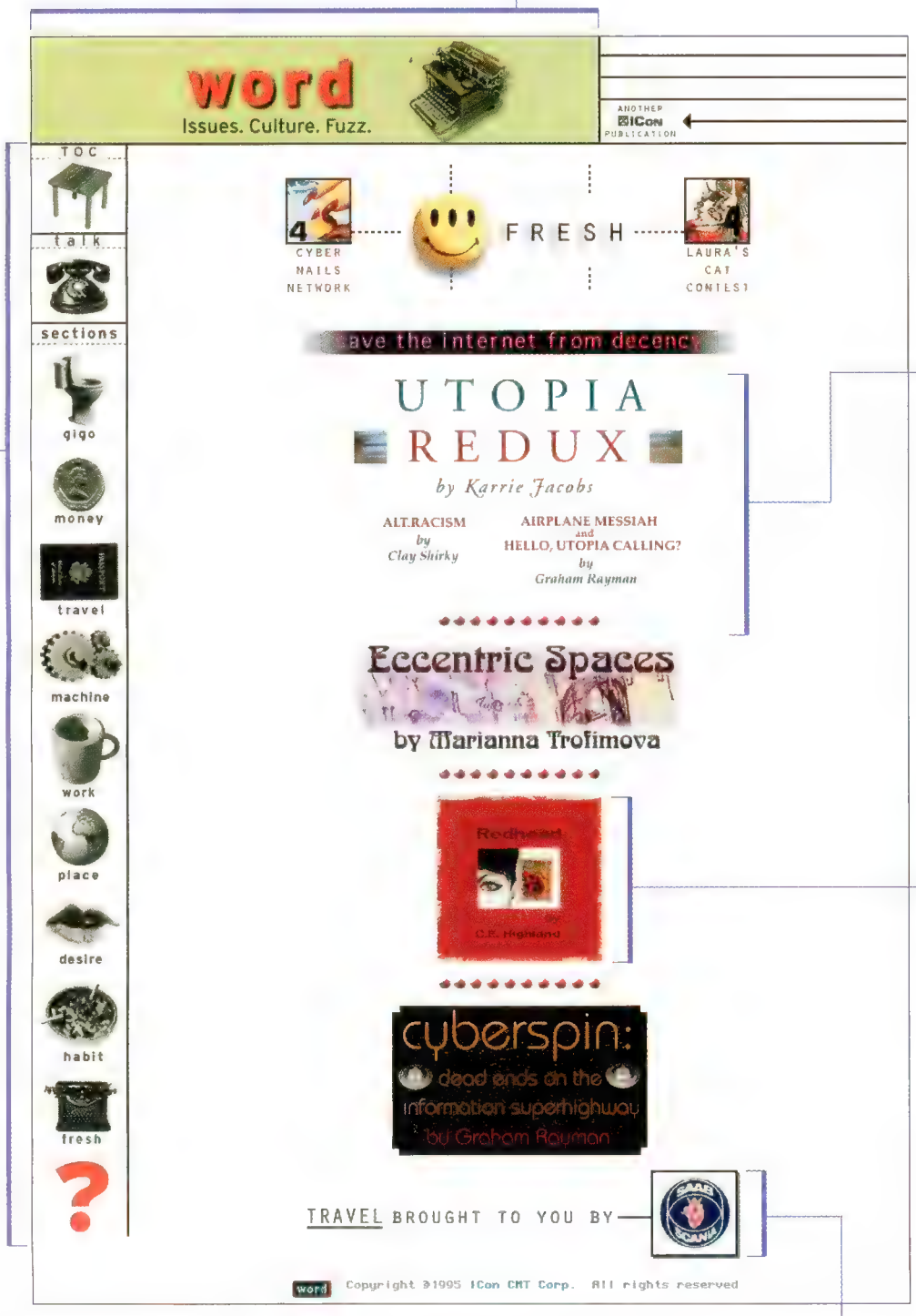
Those submitting material to Word are asked to follow the HTML guidelines Levy has imposed: No horizontal rule tags, no grey backgrounds, no standard blue borders around images. Also, no outside links within a story are allowed. Links are reserved for corporate sponsors, though story designers are credited by a logo that links to their bios and e-mail addresses. (Clicking on Word's masthead takes you to the Credits page on the Word site, which gives a breakdown of stories by writer, artist, programmer, and sound designer.)

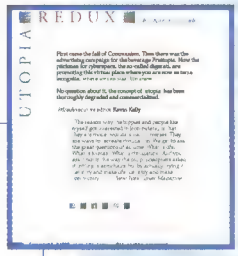
Levy's Words of Wisdom

Levy teaches an electronic publishing course at the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University. In class, she takes students through the publishing and design process, from concept to final execution of a product. Many of the students she trains continue on to design stories within the Word site, launching their careers as Web designers. When Levy has students design for the Web, she gives them two rules:

1. **Form strong concepts and create original images and animations for layouts.** Levy teaches students to use Macromedia Director (**http://www.macromedia.com/**) for pre-visualization of pages and server push animations. Levy says that Director offers a much closer paradigm than Photoshop, with its static layers, for compositing sounds, images, and animations on the Web. Director allows Levy and the students to work with events and sequencing in a way that's much closer to how the Web behaves than Photoshop.
2. **Think in terms of "low-bandwidth" design.** Levy demonstrates techniques within DeBabelizer, a graphics processing tool for the Mac (**http://www.equilibrium.com/**), that make images smaller – like analyzing each image to decide what compression it can withstand before it loses acceptable quality. Levy critiques students both on design and on file size.

Word's Home Page Deconstructed





If they're using Netscape to view Word, visitors to the site are greeted by a headline banner that reads "WORD: Issues. Culture..." and a third word that changes every 10 minutes. Enter clever reason number one, out of many, to return to this site, or visit many times a week.

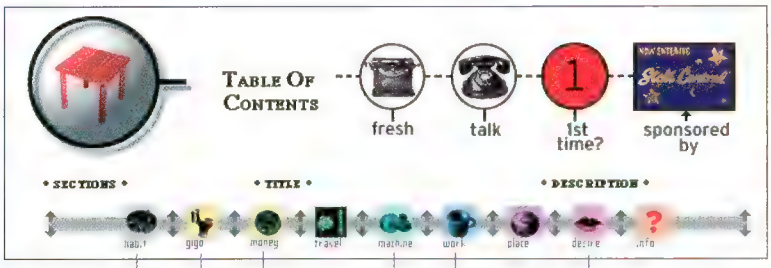
Clicking on the "Utopia Redux" headline will take you to the text of the article, in which Karrie Jacobs tackles the issue of whether cyberspace is indeed the place "where we can start life anew."

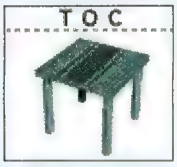
Click on the graphic, and you'll be transported to an article within the Desire section, which laments redheads' tiredness of being reduced to a fetish or worse.

Word is divided into sections that contain different types of stories. The icon bar that runs along the left of the main screen changes every 10 minutes to reorganize the order of the sections. This gives sponsors of each area equal time in the prime real estate part of the home page screen.

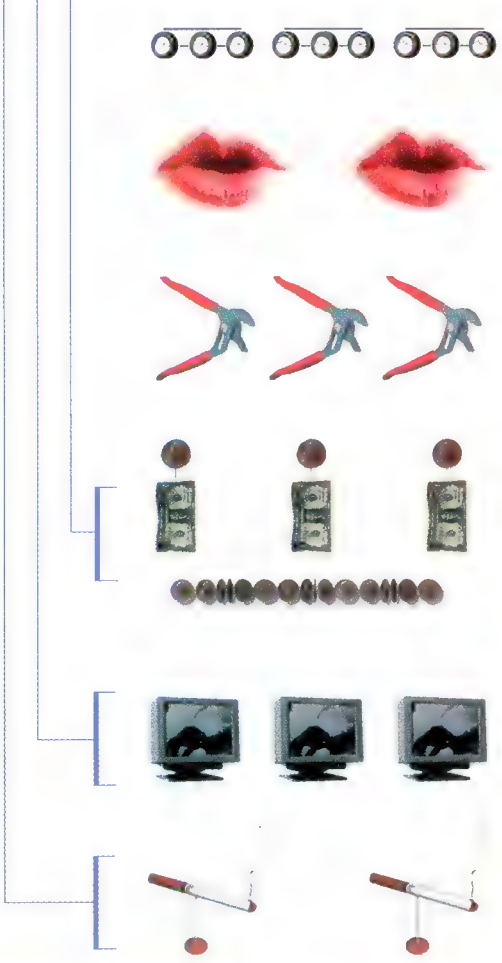
Word has lined up sponsors for each of its sections, and rotates their appearance on the home page.

Word's Table of Contents Deconstructed





Click on the TOC icon in the home page, and you'll be taken to an effective "map" of the site (http://www.word.com/toc/toc.html) containing small thumbnail icons that direct viewers to each area on Word. And a click on an icon takes you to that section – where you'll find an animation sequence at the top of the section page. Still frames from some of the animations are shown at the right.



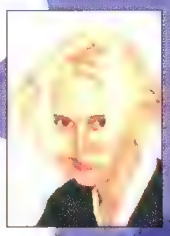
Three different examples of possible "third word" banners.

Breaking All the Rules

One of Word's trademarks is its generous use of animation within the site. Not only does a changing animation library greet visitors on the main page, but each section and article usually has its own animations, too. These are created using "server push" (see *The Net* Oct. 96, pages 66-69, or http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/back/1095/design.html) and Macromedia Director (find out about ordering Director at http://www.macromedia.com/AYS/Products/na.html). Most of the pages also use tables (*The Net* Dec. 96, pages 66-67, or http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/back/1295/design.html), CGI scripts written in Perl (for programming the changing graphics and banner every 10 minutes), and Netscape-enhanced HTML. The site is flagrantly "Netscape Enhanced," though a text version is also available (http://www.word.com/textword/index.html). Most of what makes Word stand out from the rest of the Web's sites could not have been achieved without the designers implementing the HTML tags that Netscape pioneered.

Profile of a Web Site Creative Director

Though the Web is something Levy has been immersed in for the last year, she is no stranger to new media pursuits. Her pioneering self-published electronic magazines, created in the late 1980s, earned her stripes and arrows in the computer design industry. Asked what she thought when she first saw the Web, Levy responded: "I knew this was what I'd been waiting for. There was no reason to make my own disks any more – multimedia had finally found its medium".



Levy has succeeded in creating the look and feel of an online publication that proves her predictions right. Word has produced consistently high-quality Web design that is unparalleled in a site that changes its content this regularly. Keep your eyes on this woman, and on this site, for innovation, risk-taking, and very cool visuals and multimedia integration.

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The Secrets of Eudora:

Beyond the Basics of E-mail

by Christopher Martin

Every time I read my e-mail, I vow to learn something new about Eudora to make my time spent with this electronic wonder truly meaningful. I long to learn about signatures, and how to work with cumbersome file formats. I yearn to be released from the agony of a single, solitary mailbox.

Well, I decided to do something about it, and will now unveil to you some darn handy tools to make your e-mail experience a little easier. I've included information for both Mac and Windows users who are using the most current versions of Eudora Light (a freeware program): version 1.5.4 for the Mac and 1.52.002 for Windows.

The full version of Eudora offers some nifty enhancements – like mail filtering – but we figured that many of you would be starting out with the free version, so that's why we're focusing on it here. So follow along as we show some great ways to save time and organize your e-mail using Eudora.

Creating Mailboxes

What's life with just one lonely little in-box? Create two, three, or 40 more mailboxes and folders to properly organize your electronic correspondence. There are two ways to create new mailboxes and folders for mail storage:

1. Choose mail items in your in-box and transfer them directly to a new mailbox or folder.

Mac/Windows:

- While the message(s) are highlighted in the in-box, choose "Transfer" from the file menu and select "New" (Figure 1). A dialog box will appear, requesting a name for your new mailbox. Just fill in the name and hit enter. Your new mailbox is created and your messages are transferred automatically.

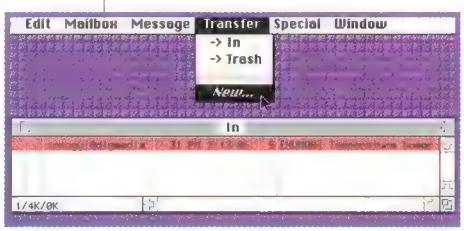


Figure 1

2. Manually create new mailboxes and folders. This new mailbox or folder can be used to store messages via the "Transfer" menu option.

Mac:

- Open the "Mailboxes" window (unintuitively located under the "Window" menu). Hit "New." Then type in the name of your new "Mailbox" and hit "OK" (Figure 2).

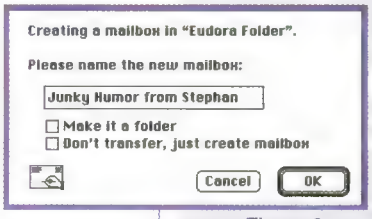


Figure 2

Windows:

- From the "Mailbox" menu, select "New" (Figure 3).

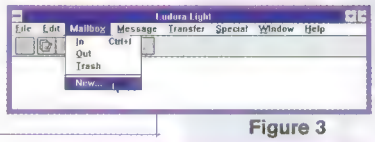


Figure 3

- A dialog box is displayed to let you name the mailbox and also to designate if it's a folder. Type in the name and hit "OK" (Figure 4).

Figure 4

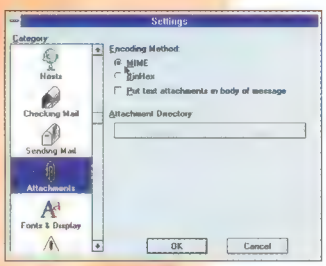
Encoding of Files for Mac Users

If a file is not plain text (ASCII), it will be encoded in one of three formats, depending upon your selection in the "Attachments" setting located under the Special menu:

- **AppleDouble is the most universal method; it's used if the recipient uses MIME.**
- **AppleSingle is used when the recipient uses MIME and has a Mac.**
- **BinHex is usually safest to use when you're sending to Mac users who don't use Eudora or may have an older version.**

Encoding of Files for Windows Users

Two encoding options exist in the Windows Attachments setting: MIME (see image at the right) and BinHex.



Attaching Documents

Why edit your thoughts when you can send attached files brimming with words (and pictures, too!)? An important rule of thumb to remember when you work with attachments is that the recipient should have the appropriate tools to open the attached file. Both Mac and Windows versions of Eudora Light allow you to choose the most appropriate encoding method, depending on the recipient's environment. To keep your attachment worries low, make sure your recipient is using the current version of Eudora.

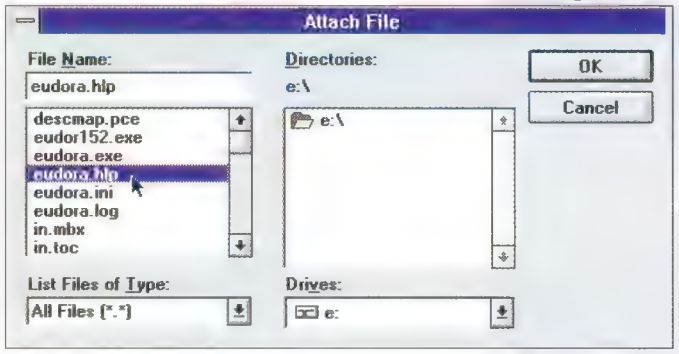
Mac:

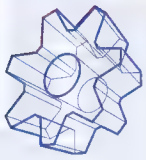
Once you've started a new message, select "Attach Document" from the "Message" menu or hit Command-H. This calls up a browsing window, which allows you to choose the file to be attached. Just double-click on the file and you're done.

Windows:

The same hunt-'n-click method of file attachment applies to Windows users. From the "Message" menu, select "Attach File." A dialog box appears, allowing you to wade through your files. Again, click on the file and choose "OK" (Figure 5).

Figure 5





Nicknames: For Single and Group Addresses

Cumbersome e-mail addresses got you feeling down? Try nicknames! Nicknames make message addressing easy, by allowing you to use single-word aliases for your most often-used addressees. Instead of typing out the e-mail address in the "To:" section of the message header, you simply have to type the nickname; better yet, include the nickname in the "Quick Recipient List."

1. To create a nickname, select a piece of mail and assign a nickname to the sender or senders.

Mac/Win:

- Highlight the message in the in-box from the sender whom you'd like nicknamed. Select "Make Nickname" from the "Special" menu. A dialog box appears that requests the nickname for that addressee (Figure 6). Type in the nickname, click "OK," and you're done. Then, next time you want to type a message to that person, go to "Nicknames" in the "Window" menu and select that person's nickname from your list of nicknames. Then hit "To:", and it will automatically be inserted into your message to that person. To make a group nickname, just select more than one message from your in-box and the nickname you select will refer to that group of addresses.

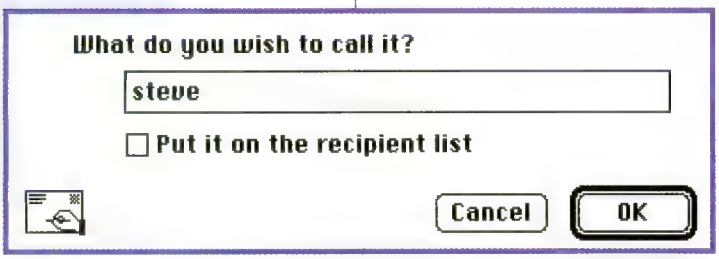


Figure 6

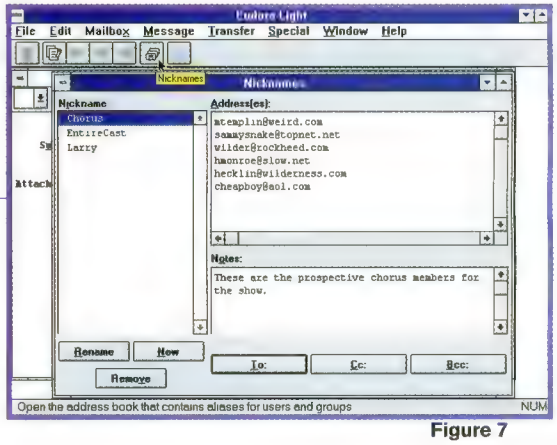


Figure 7

2. Edit and delete nicknames, in addition to creating new ones.

Mac/Win:

- From the "Window" menu, select "Nicknames." (Windows users can also click on a button resembling a card file on the "Program" menu – Figure 7).
- Select "New." Eudora first prompts you for the nickname. Enter the nickname and hit return. The new nickname is now included in the nickname list, and the cursor moves to the "Address(es)" section of the window. Type in the full e-mail address and close the window to save your changes (Figure 8).
- To create group nicknames using this method, you can just continue to type addresses, separated by hard returns or commas (Figure 9).

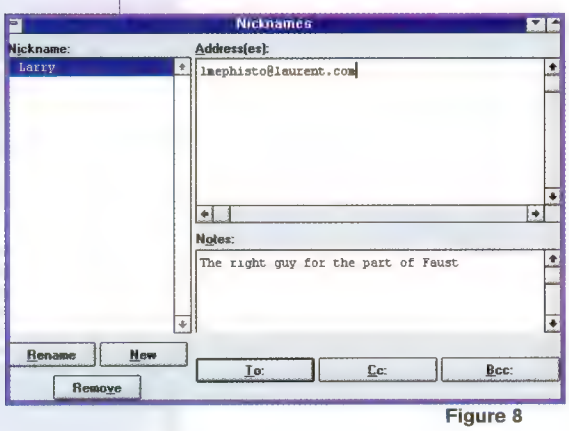


Figure 8

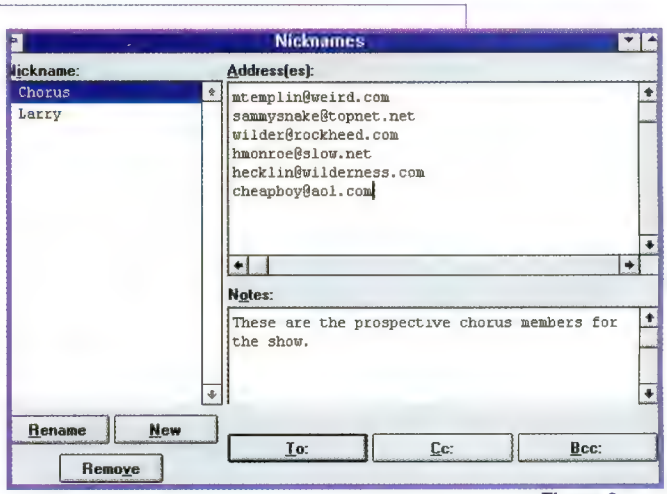


Figure 9

3. Use "Nicknames" to create even more nicknames.

Say you've created separate nicknames for the people in your immediate workgroup or circle of friends. To create a group mailing list, highlight all of those nicknames and select "Make Nickname" from the "Special Menu," (Figure 10) and choose a nickname for the entire group without having to retype all of their e-mail addresses (Figure 11).

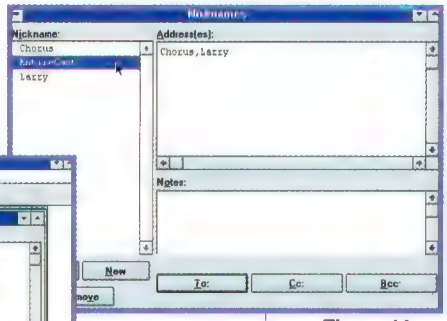


Figure 11

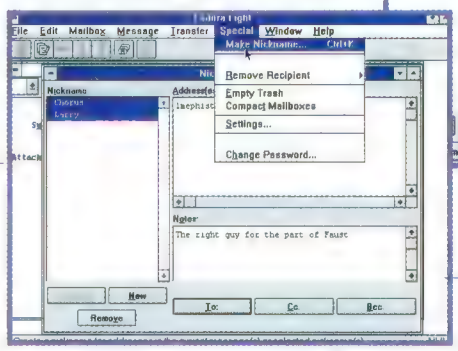


Figure 10

You can then select these group nicknames to make a singular nickname that includes all your friends and workgroup. There's no limit to this nicknaming of nicknames, as long as each nickname eventually leads to a real e-mail address.

Signatures

Signatures lend a personal touch to your outgoing e-mail messages. They often include some witty saying or maxim, but can simply be a return address or phone number. They're usually included at the conclusion of a message.

Mac/Win: Choose "Signature" from the "Window" menu item. You're now presented with a window to put in your e-pearls of wisdom (Figure 12). To include your signature in an outgoing message, click and check the cursive JH located on the banner that runs across the "New Message" window (Figure 13).

Figure 12

Figure 13

FYI:

Try not to make your signature too wide, as some mail readers (not Eudora, of course!) can't display more than 60 characters on one line.

Netiquette: Rules of the Road for New E-Mail Users

1. **Do not forward chain letters, and if you must for fear of witches and bad karma, expect to get some nasty replies. Chain letters often have mile-long headers that chew up bandwidth, and if there's one thing experienced users are picky about, it's wasted bandwidth.**

2. **Keep signature files as small as possible. ASCII pictures are, at times, amusing, but they aren't worth it. Besides eating bandwidth, your clever design often gets shuffled in the transition from your box to another, and the Mona Lisa you spent hours creating ends up looking like a pepperoni pizza.**

3. **Capitalized sentences read digitally LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING. So only use all caps only when you really want to SHOUT.**

4. **Smilies are annoying, so use them sparingly.**

5. **Some people get really cranky about capitalizing sentences and using proper punctuation, spelling, etc. After all, when communicating in a text-based medium, it's logical that proper punctuation will help bring your ideas across with more clarity.**

6. **Don't send huge files – attachments of JPEGs or documents – unless you know the person you are sending the file to has an e-mail program and server that can handle the weight. If it's over 25K, it's a good idea to ask first.**

7. **When responding to a Usenet post, keep your comments to the point. If you really must insert the events of your dog Fluffy's life into everything you write, perhaps you might do better to post to the alt.pets.dog newsgroup instead of alt.nuclear-war.**

8. **When involved in a flame war (which will inevitably happen, and can often be quite fun), keep the messages private. That means: Don't post the entire war to the newsgroup or mail list in which it started; keep it confined to private e-mail accounts. The rest of the group will be thankful for this.**

9. **READ the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions), if available, before posting to newsgroups and mail lists, and if you don't know where to find the FAQ, it's acceptable to ask.**

10. **There are millions of people online, with different religious beliefs, sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds, etc. When posting to public forums, keep this in mind – what is not offensive to you may be breaking a code of ethics to someone else. In other words, play nice.**

Where to Get It:

EUDORA LIGHT FREEWARE (for both Mac and Windows): http://www.qualcomm.com/ProdTech/quest/light.html

EUDORA PRO (for both Mac and Windows): Can be ordered from http://www.qualcomm.com/orders/eudoraform.cgi. It costs $89 per unit.

net FAQ

Most of us discovered the Internet by surfing on the Web. Now many of us want to give our Web browsers a rest and see what other gems the net has to offer. Only problem: more rules and tricks to learn. We rounded up some of the most frequently asked questions from readers who want help exploring the Internet outside of the Web.

by Todd Marshall

Got a question about getting or staying online? We've got answers. Send your questions via e-mail to **faq@thenet-usa.com**, or by snail mail to: **150 North Hill Dr. Brisbane, CA 94005.**

Subscribing to Newsgroups from an ISP

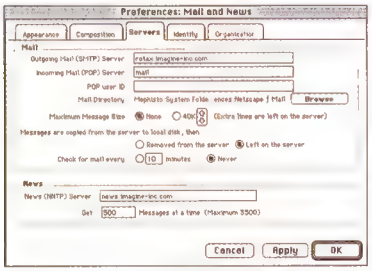
I just left America Online for a local Internet access provider. With AOL, it was easy to subscribe to a newsgroup and download and view files formatted in things like JPEG and AVI. Now I'm using Netscape and I can't figure out how to do any of this any more.

Gene (esonye@mail.vivid.net)

While connecting to the Internet through America Online definitely isn't the fastest way, it has one major advantage: AOL provides everything you need to gain access to a lot of the Internet. Now that you're getting on the net through an Internet Service Provider, you have to download various pieces of shareware that will help you to do what you want to do on the net. Luckily, the newest version of Netscape Navigator (version 2.0, available at **http://home.netscape.com/**) has its own newsgroup reading software built in, so you should be able to get on to most newsgroups, no problem.

Here's the steps you need to take to sign onto a newsgroup:

1. Pull down the Options menu in Netscape, and choose "Mail and News Preferences."
2. Click the "Servers" tab that appears in the window that opened up when you chose "Mail and News Preferences."
3. In the "News" section of the window, enter the name of the news server used by your ISP. Generally, the name is either **news**.ispdomain.**com** or **nntp.** ispname.**com**.



When you pull down the Option menu in Netscape and choose "Mail and News Preferences," you'll be presented with a window in which to type in the name of the news server used by your ISP.

4. Click "OK."
5. Enter a newsgroup address in the area where you normally enter a Web address. But instead of typing **http://**, type **news:**. Be sure *not* to type in the forward slashes, like you do when you're entering a Web address. Say you wanted to access the newsgroup **alt.music.abba**. You would simply enter **news:alt.music.abba**. An easier way is to access a Web page that has all the newsgroups indexed, so all you have to do is click the hyperlink, and the newsgroup will be loaded up for you. Once you access a newsgroup, you can also bookmark it, just like you would a Web page.

No need to worry about forward slashes when you're entering newsgroup addresses.

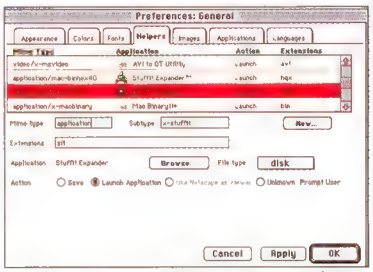
As for downloading JPEGs and the like, you'll have to first download a utility like UUDecode, which converts the binary code that you're downloading into the appropriate image file. For Windows users, you can find a good version at **http://www.infocom.net/~elogan/wuudoall.html**. Mac users can check out StUU (**ftp://mirror.apple.com/mirrors/Info-Mac.Archive/cmp/stuu.hqx**).

Downloading Netscape Software

We're trying to download the new Netscape software. Eventually, a window opens up asking us to configure a viewer. What does this mean and how do we do this?

Marcus (nichol69@idir.net)

What's likely happening is that the new version of Netscape (again, available from **http://home.netscape.com/**) is compressed and needs to be decompressed. You need to have a decompression helper application that's configured properly to do this. If you are a Windows user, you need PKUnzip (**http://home.earthlink.net/~mommadillo/pkunzip.html** or **ftp://ftp.u.washington.edu/pub/user-supported/byteman/pub/utils/pkz204g.exe**); if you use a Mac, get StuffIt Expander (**ftp://ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu/Web/Mosaic/Mac/Helpers/stuffit-expander-352.hqx**). After you've downloaded the decompression helper app that's right for you, go into the "Options" menu bar in Netscape and hit the "General Preferences" menu. In the window that opens up, choose "Helpers." You'll see the decompression app you just downloaded in there. Click on it, then click on the "Browse" button; this will give you a chance to save it to wherever you want it on your hard drive. Then, after it's decompressed and installed, you should be set to use the new version of Netscape.



After you've downloaded the decompression helper app, go into the "Options" menu bar in Netscape and hit "General Preferences."

Chatting on the Net

Do you have to have an IRC to chat on the net? Also, if you do, what, if any, would the cost be for getting into a chat line in the Web?

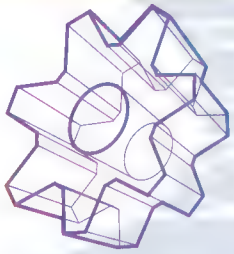
KLarson337@aol.com

There are several ways to chat on the net. IRC stands for Internet Relay Chat, and is the chatting standard for the Internet. There are plenty of IRC clients, including a free module from Netscape Navigator (**http://www.netscape.com/comprod/chat.html**). Basically, once you download the software, just download any IRC chat line you come across and you're there. Getting addresses is the only hard thing. A good place to start is Yahoo's listing of IRC channels (**http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/Chatting/IRC/Channels/**). There are several other ways to chat on the Internet. Some servers have been configured to handle chatting right on the Web; you don't need anything but your browser. If you have a bigger bandwidth, you can chat face-to-face with someone on a CU-SeeMe channel, or you can immerse yourself in a 3D world and chat with other characters by using free software like Worlds Chat (**http://www.worlds.net/**). In short: You can chat without spending any money, except for what you already pay to your Internet provider.

Worlds Chat offers free chat software.

The World (Wide Web) According to Lynda:

Animation on the Web



by Lynda Weinman

Animation on the Web – this has been my preoccupation over the last few months. It's an especially up-close and personal subject, since I spent many of my professional years in the film industry, making animations, and teaching and consulting on animation projects. What with Netscape plug-in mania raging in full force, new file formats popping up on a daily basis, and hyper-hypey hysteria about Java and Shockwave brewing, I thought I would share my research on animation, and make some predictions on where this stuff is heading.

It's No Dream: Multiple Images in One GIF File

The MOST exciting thing I want to share with you this month is my discovery that Netscape 2.0 supports this thingy called "multi-block GIFs." Remember those revered GIF89a's you've probably heard referred to as "transparent GIFs" in the past? That same wonderfulm technical-sounding file format does something in its specs that none of us ever thought Netscape would support – it can embed multiple images within one GIF file, and play them back really fast, and sweet over the Web when viewed with Netscape 2.0b3 and higher.

Whoa! You mean, like we get to squeeze by life without ever having to learn to program Server Push? Yay! As long as you can make a series of images and name them numerically, you can use two programs to author these babes: GifBuilder for the Mac (**http://iawww.epfl.ch/Staff/Yves.Piguet/clip2gif-home/GifBuilder. html**), and Gif Construction Set (**http://www.north.net/alchemy/gifcon.html**) for the PC. This guy on America Online uses his free pages to document the whole story (**http://member.aol.com/royalef/gifanim.htm**); after reading it, Bruce Heavin (**http://home.earthlink.net/~bruceheavin**), designer of *The Net*'s Lava Lounge (**http:// www. thenet-usa.com/ chat/chat. html**), and I (**http:// www. lynda.com**) immediately set out to compete to see who could make the cooler animation using the new tools.

The first frame of Lynda's pointing finger man animation, using the GIF89a multi-block animation feature. It can be seen on her site at http://www2.lynda.com/lynda/multigif.html.

Sizzle on the Net

Next in progression, a favorite geek buddy o' mine, the always-amazing Juan Gonzales (who is responsible for R&D at disney.com; check 'em out at **http://www.disney.com**), showed me Sizzler (**http://www.totallyhip.com/sizzler/6_sizz.html**). It's a plug-in that wasn't even listed on the Netscape site. Sizzler is a really cool animation program that requires a plug-in, but doesn't make you learn any code. It lets you easily set up animations with custom timings and delays, and plays them back with and without interlacing. It even has some simple and tasteful animation examples on its site – something Macromedia (**http://www.macromedia.com**), which created Shockwave (**http://www.macromedia.com/Tools/Shockwave/index.html**), could learn a lesson from.

What was almost more interesting was where Juan found out about this new plug-in: the latest incarnation of Browser Watch (**http://www.browserwatch.com/**), which has a section called Plug-in Plaza. Browser Watch rewards spies who supply links to undiscovered plug-ins with "net fame," and there are a host of plug-ins that Netscape hasn't even announced yet.

Some Rants

O.K., I'm gonna rant against Shockwave for a moment. I've been into Director since it was called VideoWorks back in 1985, so don't get me wrong – it's just that people always abuse these newfangled tools and Shockwave abuse is currently raging. Can you really tell me that 300k for a file is a cool thing to stick over on your 14.4 baud-breathen sister or brother? And what about the streaming capability that was promised (streaming is the ability to download the images and view them while they're downloading)? Didn't the press releases say Shockwave was going to have compression and streaming? Perhaps it's coming, but from what I've seen, we're expected to wait for these huge things to download entirely before a single frame can be viewed. Ugh.

Not to mention that animation on Web sites is something designers should use gingerly, like a momentary respite or bit o' eye-candy for the Web-worn traveler. Most of the Shockwave demos I'm seeing aren't worth their wait, or their weight, because they're too damn big and overpowering. If you're watching the animation instead of the content of a page, and nothing else is loading correctly, is the animation helping or hindering?

And Java (**http://java.sun.com/**) works, but my... my... Talk about programming hell! Of course, all those easy-to-use Java authoring tools are coming right around the corner, right? Meanwhile, uh, like forget it, unless you're a proficient hacker already. I'll stick with these new multi-block GIF toys, thank you.

And Some OTHER THINGS...

Thanks to David Biedny's (**http://www.microweb.com/idig/**) great tip, I headed over to a little gold mine of a booth at the January MacWorld Expo trade show called FutureWave (**http://www.futurewave.com/**). Watch these guys for their new vector-based animation program for the Web. Vectors are cool, vectors are small, vectors are smart! In case you were wondering, vector graphics are smaller than bitmap graphic formats like JPEG and GIF, but they haven't yet been supported by

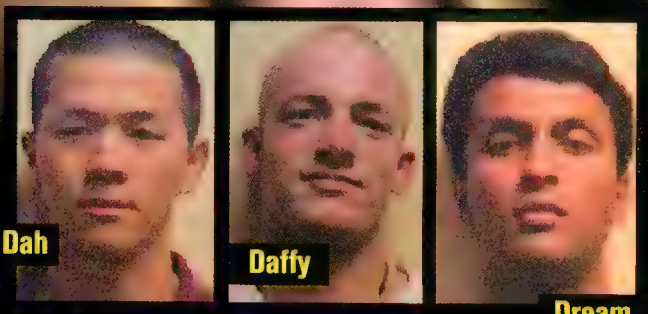
Web browsers. The folks at Futurewave showed a fully animating Netscape home page that weighed in at 14k (5k smaller than the current graphic with *no* animation). Keep your eyes peeled on this yet-unnamed product. When you get tired of all the slow animation downloads, or of installing more plug-ins and enduring more Netscape beta crashes, sit down for a good read with Carla Sinclair's new book, *NetChick* (**http://www.cyborganic.com/People/ carla/swellpeople.html**). No animation, but good, interesting content does still count, doesn't it? And very special thanks to the latest BBEdit by Bare Bones Software (**http://www.tiac.net/biz/bbsw/**), which made my Web authoring life much easier this month by offering a spell-checker, automatic image size reader, and batch processing to change links over multiple documents. Life on the net for the Web designer is traveling along dandily, making steady progress for all us pioneers with those pesky arrows in our backs...

Lynda Weinman teaches Web design, interactive multimedia, and motion graphics at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. She is the author of *<Designing Web Graphics>* (New Riders Publishing) ISBN:1-56205-532-1. Her Web pages can be found at http://www.lynda.com.

Bizarre Site of the Month

http://www.gatech.edu/steve/ugly/

Server, server, how do they rate? Who's the ugliest of the eight? These questions are answered by The Ugly Contest, an endearing little Web page that displays the unflattering mugs of eight not-so-handsome dudes, and asks you to crown the most homely. After you've made your pick by clicking on the appropriate form button, you're invited to scoot on over to another page that displays the cumulative polling results.



America the Ugly: Love It or Leave It

by Jon Phillips

How many Internet visitors voted for Gob? Surely, he can't be considered the ugliest, can he? No, no, Gob is merely unattractive. What about Daffy? He's not very good-looking, is he? Well, no, but perhaps Daffy was just having a bad no-hair day when his picture was taken. So what about Jake? A weaseley sort, no doubt. But ugly? Not really. Rodent-like, yes. Ugly, no.

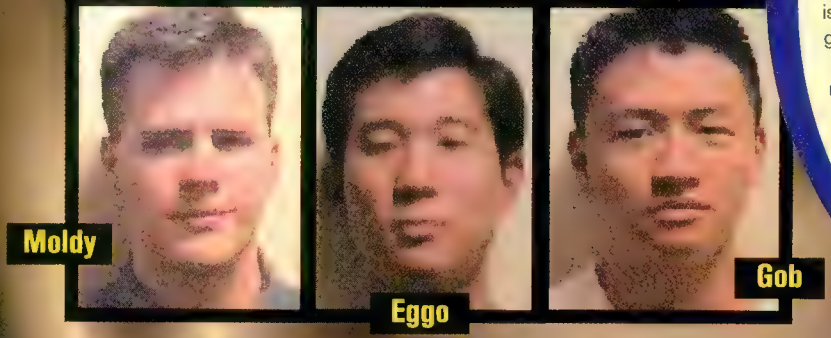
And that's the kicker: None of the contestants is conspicuously hideous. Here you'll find an octet of forgettable anybodys. Some may have gone to the senior prom, but most probably didn't. This is America. This is the Internet. This is about spending more time on your scripts for Solaris 2.5 than on your skin care and hair primping.

Steve "Eggo" Park, a 23-year-old computer science major at the Georgia Institute of Technology, explains the origin of his experiment in public humiliation: "It all started a long time ago when one guy asked for an account on another guy's machine. The machine owner granted the account, but named the person "Ugly." After an outpouring of ugly jokes and insults, the person deemed "ugly" decided to have the net vote."

Eggo says he and the ugly boys don't mind being judged by strangers worldwide. "In fact, we're flattered that people would actually take the time to vote," he says. "We've received a lot of hilarious responses, like, 'What's that thing growing on the right side of Butterfly's cheek?' But it worries me when people at domains like nasa.gov are voting. In fact, we've gotten more than one-hundred hits from .gov domains. I'm still waiting on whitehouse.gov."

While Al Gore shuffles toward a decision ("Hmmm, should I go for the nebbishly unappealing Butterfly, or the curiously repellent Dream?"), you better jam on over and cast your ballot before the boys dismantle their self-deprecating freak show. And don't blame Eggo if you can't muster a judgment. As his page gleefully promises, "There are plenty of ugly guys here to choose from!"

Eggo describes Butterfly's tally: "Well strangely enough, Butterfly, the current leader, seems to take it pretty well. Perhaps he's burning up with range within, but if so, he seems to be concealing it well. When it became apparent that Butterfly was going to "win" hands down, we kept a vigil as to when he would receive his one-thousandth, fifteen-hundredth, and two-thousandth vote. We're still waiting on two-thousand."



Celebrities Are Ugly Too

Good-old American ugliness isn't confined to humble college students like Eggo and his crew. That's right: There is a big, mean metropolis on the Atlantic coast called New York City, and it's teeming with ugly scenes and spectacles.

A lot of the most unseemly action occurs on late-night TV.

Go to **http://www.cen.uiuc.edu/~jl8287/glover.html** for an unnerving transcript of David Letterman's legendary 1987 interview-cum-street fight with actor-cum-ritalin candidate Crispin Glover. The recap is simultaneously frightening and captivating – like an ugly scene should be. The unstable Glover stutters like a madman throughout the segment, and forces the typically unflappable Letterman into a number of awkward corners. The unsightly spectacle is cut short when Glover sends a sweeping karate kick toward Dave's gap-toothed grill.

Equally ugly is Dave's infamous 1995 encounter with a potty-mouthed Madonna (**http://www.cen.uiuc.edu/~jl8287/madonna-interview.html**). In this transcript, Dave bobs, weaves, ducks and parries to defend against an unprecedented barrage of confrontational expletives and innuendo. Madonna repeatedly refuses to exit the set, but finally capitulates after singing the praises of urinating in the shower, and accusing Dave of smoking pot. (She uses the street-term "indo.") Not since Andy Kaufmann's 1981 sabotage of the late-night comedy show "Fridays" (**http://fly.hiwaay.net/~bkm/fridays.htm**) has a celebrity at the peek of his or her career volunteered so much trouble.

The Realcom Truth About Registering a Domain Name

by Crystal Waters

This month I've decided to tell you a little story about my life. About thirtysomething years ago, my mom Leona gave birth to a 6 lbs., 12 oz. bouncing baby girl (me). I lived with my five brothers and sisters in Vermont until I ventured to Boston, New York, and then San Francisco to find fame and fortune. And so the time came when I was grown up enough to register my own domain name.

This has been my life.

You'd think it would be easy. My friend and design-a-rama author Lynda Weinman got what's known as a "vanity" domain in, like, 10 seconds flat. Her site is now http://www.lynda.com. So I tried that. Crystal.com was taken in April 1991 by Crystal Software Development, Inc. of Middletown, OH. Waters.com is the property of Waters Corporation in Milford, Mass. A cruise to www.crystalwaters. com gives you an Internet provider's page, because the company who registered the name hasn't done anything with it yet. And, yes, I tried to contact the company to rib them about using *my* name as *its* domain name, but to no avail.

Crystalwaters.com is too much to type, anyway. So I tried the simple approach: I'd pick a word that was easy to remember, easy to spell, and would roll lusciously off the public's collective tongue like word-, suck-, or meat-dot-com – all sites that have not only received worldwide kudos, but I like them, too. And they're fun to say. Go ahead, repeat after me: suck-dot-com. suck-dot-com. suck-dot-com.

My resulting brainchild: poke.com. I fell in love with this domain name as soon as I came up with it. I called my friends, and they all approved. Some even wanted to contribute to the new site. I wrote a check to my service provider for my domain name registration fee. In my hurry to get this property under my belt, I forgot to actually check via InterNIC's registration gopher search (gopher://rs.internic.net/) if the name had already been taken. I mean, who the hell else would want it but me? But Jim, the techie at my service provider, assured me someone else did, and had claimed the name. Next, I tried polka.com. (Get it? Polka dot? Oh well.) Taken. Other variations on "poke" didn't soothe me (pokeme.com: too desperate-sounding; slowpoke.com: too negative; pokethis.com: looks stupid).

So I tried another angle. At this point I didn't care about relevancy. I'm talented, I thought, I can work around relevancy. Bug. The. Byline. Other. Box. Acme. Spoke. Ax.

All taken. At a friend's suggestion, I tried h20.com. This would be cool, I thought, because it was a family vanity license plate for years, and if I could get one of those plates, and scan it... What a great graphic element. Nope, taken.

I tried abbreviations: dz (dozen), oz (ounce), cz (canal zone), bu (bushel). All taken. Then, at 3 a.m., I found myself reading the dictionary. Adrenal. Boot. Cow. Dynapolis. Emu. All either taken or dumb. I got to the h's, and decided to start from the back. Zip. Taken. Zig. Taken. Zag. Taken. I thought about reading a book on mythology, or pick a character from a Neil Gaiman book. But did I really want people to have to think about the depth of meaning of my domain name?

In frantic sleep-deprived mode, I tried making up words. Believe it or not, zeg.com is still available – at press time, that is. Zeg. Original, yes. Could I make it into an anagram? Zephyr Entertainment Group. Zippo Enlightenment Guru. I then took my temperature. It appeared normal.

I flipped some pages, and there was a word. One that's not only easy to spell, but one that described a serious and passionate pastime of mine: typo. I can do that.

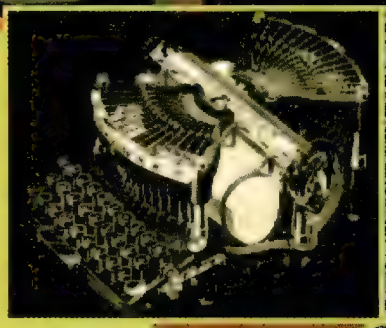
I typed it in, slowly and carefully, all the time mumbling a promise to the InterNIC gods that I would maintain this site with every ounce of my being (at least outside of business hours) if they'd only let it be available.

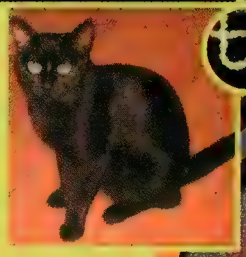
"No match for 'TYPO.COM'." I tried it again. And again. And again, just to make sure. Bingo. I immediately sent off a letter to Jim: "Guess what? I FINALLY found a domain name that's actually not taken (I know you don't believe me after all this, but give it a try...)..."

By the time you read this, http://www.typo.com should be smoothly up and running. In the meantime, if you're looking to register a domain name, do it fast. There are 12 million estimated Web sites, and – this is just a guess – about 1,500 words or letter combinations left. Apparently, the NSI, which handles InterNIC domain name registrations, gets more than 600 requests for domain names a day. Just in case you can't think of anything, "bleep.com" is still available. At press time, that is.

Domain Name Facts

- Ask your Internet provider if it can help in the registration process. It may cost a bit more, but it'll also save some form-filling headaches.
- Before you send in your registration, make sure the domain name you want is still available.
- When you do a search, type the full domain name, for example "typo.com," not just "typo."
- Determine your appropriate domain classification, for example, COM, ORG and NET (EDU, MIL and GOV are reserved). Read full regulations for each type of suffix at **http://www.internic.net/**.
- A domain name, including its suffix, must be 24 characters or fewer.
- Only letters, numbers, and hypens are allowed in domain names. Names can't start or end with a hypen.
- Registration fees include a $100 registration fee of a new domain name, and a $50 annual maintenance fee. Both are non-refundable.
- For more details, go to the InterNIC site at **http://www.internic.net/**.





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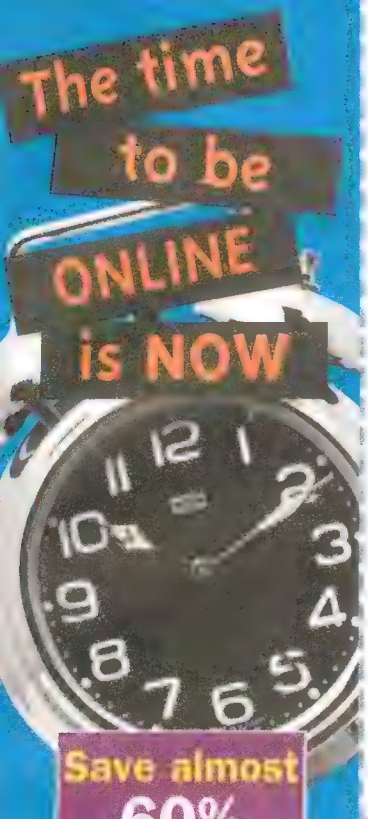

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blue pages

The Net's Directory

May 1996

Ahh, another month, another Blue Pages – the handy dandy 32 pages of recycled wonder reference. Each month we scout out the best (and worst) the Web has to offer and then write concise, yet suspiciously clever, reviews. We want you to get what you want from the Internet's oft-daunting barrage of links and choices to never never land.

Unfortunately, between the time we go to print and the time you get this in your mailboxes, some of the sites "disappear" – it's common. People change service providers, servers go down, etc. We're now posting updated addresses on our site (with the archives of Blue Pages past in full hyperlink glory) at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/blue.html**.

And for those of you who have been sending URLs to **blue@thenet-usa.com** for potential review, keep it up. We love the mail! We only ask that you include the category you think the site belongs in. And don't forget to check out the bios of our Blue Pages reviewers, on page 90. *–Blue Grrrl*

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We use three different criteria when we review a Web site. Check out our little icons to see how well each site measures up:

CONTENT

How much content is there, and of what quality? Is there enough to satisfy someone interested in this topic and seeking to learn more about it? Is it good enough to keep you coming back?

- *Rich in nutrients*
- *Good amount of content*
- *Needs more juice*

AESTHETIC MERIT

How attractive is the site? Though prettiness can't usually stand on its own, the layout *is* important because it helps to pull the viewer in and excite interest.

- *A visual 10!*
- *Appealing*
- *A dog*

TECHNOLOGICAL SMARTNESS

How well-constructed is the site? Are there effective navigational tools? Does the site creatively work around HTML conventions and limitations? To what extent does the site integrate Web technologies like animation, tables, colored backgrounds, custom horizontal rules?

- *Rocket science material*
- *Smart*
- *Needs a brain*

The best sites we've found are named* Sites of the Month. *Look for the icon at the right to help identify these sites.

THE BLUE PAGES SAVES TREES!

Yes, it's true, the super blue paper on which we publish our 32-page Blue Pages not directory actually helps save trees and resources!

Each 32-page Blue Pages saves:
- 300 trees
- 125,000 gallons of water
- 550 cubic feet of landfill
- 1,100 pounds of air emissions

So far, since we expanded the Blue Pages in our March 96 issue, we've saved:
- 900 trees
- 375,000 gallons of water
- 1,650 cubic feet of landfill
- 3,300 pounds of air emissions

Note: [illegible] http://www.ran.org/ran/ [illegible]

SITE OF THE MONTH

net MAY 1996

art

Babel

http://WWW.BABELNY.COM/

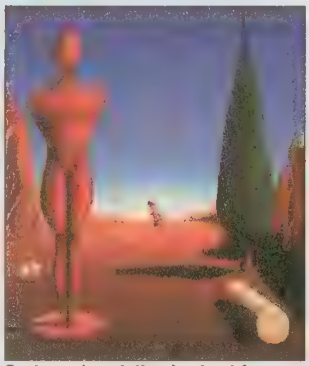
Artists link the past to the future through oil paintings, sketches, sculptures, and now the Web. Babel encourages visitors to follow artists such as Melissa Marks into the Garden area, where her online exhibit, "Volitia –The Abstract Vagina," resides. And the Babylon Lottery section explores issues of the female body and features art by Karen Yasinsky and Laura Watts. This art site may wow you with its creative design – forms, and nice graphics and layout, but it's still rather thin and slightly confusing. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Cusimano: Surrealist Artist

http://www.terraport.net/archiavv/

Surrealist art isn't always a myriad of melting clocks. On the Cusimano: Surrealist Artist site, visitors wander through six galleries that feature paintings and drawings of desert roses, carousel horses, and levitating lips. The Canadian artist, Joseph Cusimano, explains every painting to help art lovers grasp the meaning behind an image as perplexing as his human tree. Cusimano, more than his art, resembles Dali (it's the mustache). Visit this site for a good dose of bizarre art and metaphysical madness. *–BJB*



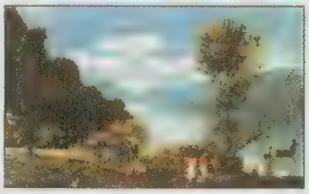
Cusimano's painting is about love as the purifying element of life.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

DIA Center for the Arts

http://www.diacenter.org/

If artists painted not from the soul but from the results of a market research survey, they would find a happy home at the DIA Center for the Arts in New York. DIA features experimental art, such as an online exhibit called, "The Most Wanted Paintings on the Web." These paintings reflect the artists' interpretations of a professional market research survey about style and taste; in turn, the site was created to please the greatest number of people. Visitors who fill out the online survey help determine future art and exhibits, making the site interactive and constantly evolving. *–BJB*



Can this be right? According to DIA, this is one of the U.S.'s most wanted paintings on the Web.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

fineArt forum online
http://www.msstate.edu/Fineart_Online/home.html
The mission of fineArt forum online is to provide useful information on art and technology to anyone who wants it. This arts and technology news site pushes the boundaries between art and the Internet within a zine featuring multimedia reviews, computer art, and a calendar of events. The Directory of Online Art Resources is a crucial part of the site for students, since it creates a space to study all facets of art. The Gallery is home to some of the best in painting, sculpture, and photographs online, with no admission fee. Some of the best fine art really can be seen for free. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

JZ Presents Art of Joan
http://www.inch.com/~jeffz/joan_art.html
Joan Stennick, like Alice in Wonderland, must have met many smiling cats in her dreams. The JZ Presents Art of Joan site wants to make sure the net isn't void of grinning kitties. But the site doesn't offer a particularly extensive showing of Joan's art, and since it's located on Joan's boyfriend's home page, it comes across more like a poorly thought-out promotion. Perhaps if JZ let Joan do her own explaining and offered a bit more than three large paintings, we might care more about images of smirking felines. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
http://www.lacma.org/
It's easy to discover the hidden secrets and lore behind the mystical artifacts of ancient Egypt when you take an online tour of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Gaze into the eyes of a sculpture from the reign of Queen Hatshepsut. Behold the grandeur of an elaborate coffin lid from a twenty-sixth dynasty official. On the bizarre side: The LACMA site features artist Annette Messager, famous for her exhibit of dead birds wearing knitted sweaters. Prepare to learn and expand your mind at LACMA, whether you plan to see a corpse surrounded in artifacts or a dead bird surrounded in cable knit. *–BJB*

Wassily Kandinsky's Untitled Improvisation III is part of LACMA's permanent exhibit on the Web.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Mark Harden's texas.net
http://www.texas.net/~mharden/index.html
On Mark's texas.net Museum of Art home page, a visitor can travel to an FTP site to download pictures of great art or follow links to other museums. Look at the Impressionists from your computer monitor... does this mean you have to step back from your screen to fully appreciate the image? Or, Mark lets you read about the best art CD-ROM titles on the market. The initial cover page of the site is riddled with graphics, making navigation a bit turbulent, but at this site, even Mona Lisa would smile. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Mary Ann King
http://www.interedge.com/MaryAnneHome.html
She wants to sell you an eggplant for $95. Actually, she wants to sell a painting

Mary Ann's eggplant still life is just $95, and you can order online.

of an eggplant still life from her Web site. This Kansas artist is not alone in her quest to sell artwork online, but the site offers nothing more than a list of paintings, small thumbnail images, and, of course, ordering information. Mary Ann could have done a better service to the Internet community by explaining why these painting have meaning, and she could have made the art community proud by incorporating the net as a learning experience. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Paris Pages: Paris Art
http://www.paris.org/ParisArt/
When planning to create a site about Paris, one would inevitably expect to make art one of the main sections. After all, Paris isn't just about haughty waiters, wine at every meal, and crusty croissants. In the Paris Art section of the Paris Pages, afficionados and collectors can search through lists of links for galleries, artists, or images. Some of the major contemporary artists residing on the site include Jean-Louis Guitard, Kara, Roger Karoubi, and Peter Klasen. An added plus: Paris Art provides prices and gallery locations for each piece featured. Viva la Web! *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

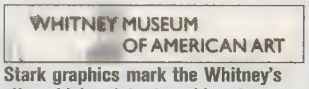
Scultura
http://www.scultura.com/
Leave it up to a bunch of artists to try to form a renaissance on the Web. Scultura Arts Forum is creating a global network for artists to meet each other and transform the Web into a valuable tool for creativity. Read the classified ads or browse around in the many different galleries. Many art media, from wood sculptures to oil on a paper bag, are on the Scultura site. While some artists focus on brilliant, hand-painted silk paintings, others try to find physical expression of their souls through dance. This site attempts to represent all artists, whether they hold a paint brush or step into toe shoes. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Castles of Wales
http://www.wp.com/castlewales/home.html
If a man's home is his castle, then what is his home page? The Castles of Wales site presents visitors with more than just a few photos of royal casas. Learn the difference between the Norman and Edward castles. View short sketches on Wales' principal castle builders, and read an examination of what motivated their creations. Test your knowledge with the Welsh Castle Quiz, and discover why Chepstow Castle in southeast Wales is one of the best castles to visit. This site offers plenty of information on the history behind these majestic land marks. The Castles of Wales is a Web site fit for a king. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Whitney Museum of American Art
http://www.echonyc.com/~whitney/
The Whitney Museum of American Art understands America's quest for its own artistic identity and celebrates new, talented artists on its Web site. Whitney features beautiful paintings of railroad sunsets and morose roses. Learn why the Beat Generation influenced American art and culture in the 1960s. Walk on the wild side in the "Altered and Irrational" section (zebra skin and Day-Glo?). Or witness oddities created from rubberized hair, mirror glass, and wood. The Whitney Museum represents some of the best, most obscure art in America with an equally exceptional Web site. *–BJB*



Stark graphics mark the Whitney's site, which celebrates old and new paintings.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Welcome to ArtsLink
http://pathfinder.com/@@sRMXEnH1hAMAQIlr/twep/artslink/
With all the independent art sites on the net, Time Warner Electronic Publishing finally took the creative plunge and returned from the underground with ArtsLink. ArtsLink provides an Artists-in-Residence section that displays a wide range of material, including abstract computer algorithm images, controversial posters about racism, colorful charcoal sketches of women, and QuickTime VR multimedia pieces. Read about projects in development, and catch up on cultural issues in the Morfogen and Associates News section. ArtsLink also wants visitors to spearhead its bulletin board discussions on topics such as the influence of AIDS in art and performance art advice. *–BJB*

ArtsLink's Artist-in-Residence program provides artists with a working space on the Internet.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

bizarre

Biologically Bizarre
http://www.missouri.edu/~c487689/bio.html
From the pages of the Not Yet Web site come a collection of biological improbabilities having more to do with the mental ramblings of a bored college student than biology itself. The page is filled with cartoony graphics of these genetically manipulated monstrosities, each with a paragraph describing their proposed function. The Greasy Lips will clean out the filthy bottoms of fast food greasers. The Nail Snail will sit on your desk and bite your nails to a perfect shape. It's cute, without being too annoying. Well, I gotta go feed my Review Writer so it won't be so cranky. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Boulder Vegetable Rights Association
http://www.bvra.org/
This activist group from Colorado is out to defend the defenseless little guys of the biosphere: vegetables. Why do vege-

Cute life forms like these tomatoes are being protected by the Boulder Vegetable Rights Association.

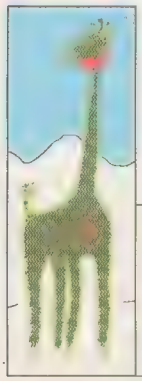
CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

Roadkills 'R Us

http://www.rru.com/rru/

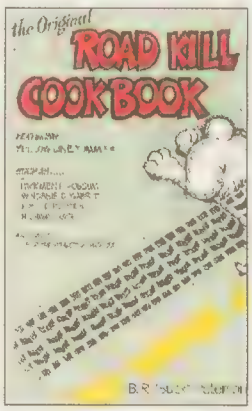
"Dedicated to recycling as far up the food chain as possible, RRU™ is known throughout the inner solar system for its fine food and other products made from roadkill," according to the RRU (Roadkills 'R Us) home page. What started off as a joke gone awry in Usenet, RRU has evolved into an ever-expansive Web site chock-full of hysterical "Network News" and miscellaneous weird stuff. The menu bar, which makes full use of Frames (part of the HTML 3.0 spec.), uses cartoon-like flat animal graphics with tire tread marks across their backs. Poor taste or outstanding humor; you be the judge.

There's also the infamous price list, perhaps the most fun aspect of the site. Scroll through a seemingly endless list of road kill animals to find their current market value – displayed in pretty Netscape tables; yes they know all the tricks. An extra-large chicken is $333.33, an aardvark is $2.50, a sucrose-laden, purple dinosaur is $2,000,000,000, and a male or female member of the White House staff is $1,000,000 per pound. Don't think that's all the fun. The corporate culture section, a relentless stab at suit life, is a frenzy of creative stories and pseudo documentaries, written extremely well, I might add. Also found in the corporate culture area is a list of employee benefits, "Our benefits are at least the equal of those given by the US military: long hours, low pay, hard work, we may treat you like dirt, and you have a good chance of getting shot at." Heh. I wonder what the market value for disgruntled employees is... It seems the site creators have run into a bit of a stint with Toys 'R Us (TRU). O.K., it's more than that. One day, not so long ago, the folks at RRU got a letter from the corporate offices of TRU, "Your use of this term is likely to cause confusion with respect to our marks..." You can only assume the rest (or visit the site to view the entire correspondence)– it's turning into quite a heated battle. Follow the site for regular updates.



Overall Roadkills 'R Us embodies the "that's entertainment" philosophy. It tackles some serious issues as it questions corporate culture and the nature of big business with the intelligent sarcasm and irreverence that is ever-prevalent online. Five gold stars and a big fat elk from me. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

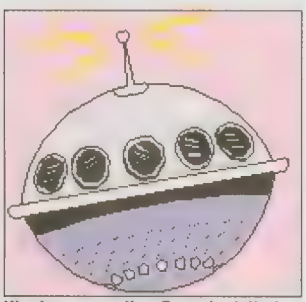


tarians find it so wrong to eat animals when millions of vegetables give up their lives for their gastronomic pleasure everyday? The Boulder Vegetable Rights Association unearths this hypocrisy with a collection of Usenet posts, advice for the recovering vegetarian, and some shocking photos of vegetables being butchered for human consumption. The site could be better-organized, and there could be a more information on the group itself, but it makes a good visit. I don't think I can ever look a tomato squarely in the eye again. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Encounters

http://www.westworld.com/~ah.ha/extra.html



Hippie space alien Zoonch visited the creator of this site.

Here we have a man who has been visited by Zoonch, a propheteering space alien shedding light on the path to peace and joy. It sounds a little too Haight Ashbury 1968, but nonetheless, it's an interesting read. But guess what, kids? That's all you get. It's one *long* page of text excerpts from a book about this experience with Zoonch that the site creator no doubt wants us to buy – 1-800 included. So, yes, it's bizarre, and you'll probably love it if you are super interested in hippie space creatures. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Fig Bar Man For President

http://www.epix.net/~wayne26/mrfigb/figbar.html

Forget Dole, Clinton, and LaRouche. The real front runner in '96 is Fig Bar Man. If you visit the Fig Bar Man's Presidential Campaign HQ, you'll read parts of his platform, press conference transcripts, and the latest poll information on a guy who has presidential aspirations and dresses like a Fig Newton. The premise is good, but there isn't enough material to make the campaign seem convincing – no "campaign" photos, charts, or weird political analysis. None of the trappings that would make this a truly great site. Now I do have a Devil Dog that would make a great vice president... *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Foam Bath Fish Time

http://redwood.northcoast.com/cgi-bin/fishtime

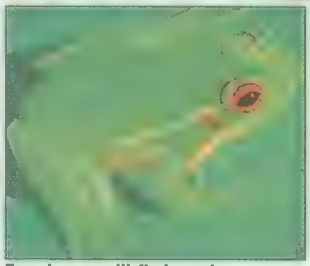
When you first enter this site, you'll see a collection of foam fish displaying the current time on the sides of their bodies. (I was hoping the fish would run around and spell out the time or something more grandiose.) While somewhat charming as it is, I have a little clock in the upper corner of my computer that can tell time too. The page also includes some clock and time links from around the world, and a collection of pun-infested fan mail. It's a solid piece of Web work and worth a look, but it didn't really float my boat, if you catch my drift. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Froggy Page

http://www.cs.yale.edu/HTML/YALE/CS/HyPlans/loosemore-sandra/froggy.html

Ribbit. If you like frogs – ribbit ribbit – you'll certainly enjoy the Froggy Page, with its dozens and dozens of frog-related links and info. First, you get froggy pictures. Mostly, the image section consists of links to other sites that contain frog GIFs and JPEGs. But then, there are froggy sounds, froggy songs, and froggy tales – *The Toad Prince* and *The Wind in the Willows*, to name a few. The frog anatomy section will fulfill the needs of the scientist within and, of course, there's



Frog lovers will find much – sounds, songs, and tales – to delight at this site.

quite a list of Kermit thee frog links, too. And remember, on the Internet, nobody knows you're a frog... *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

LoserNet

http://www.calpoly.edu/~ttokuuke/loserHP.html

LoserNet is the continuing online journal of a truly pathetic, self-purported 42-year-old virgin loser. Almost every day, he adds a paragraph to a continuing saga describing his escapades to the gym, where he feels awkward, or his time at home in a tiny apartment, where he obsesses about his neighbors. Sad as it is, the journal kept me occupied for over an hour, and I had hardly scratched the surface. Sure, there are no graphics, and the 115k text files are a bit awkward to load, but it's

sort of like watching a car wreck. Read it before he goes into therapy and becomes normal. –*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

MELVIN
http://www.melvin.com/

MELVIN is a humor magazine that bills itself as America's First Web site. While it might not be the first, it's certainly one of the better ones. Opening with a big newspaper-esque splash page with a "fake" tabloid story headline, MELVIN

Using tabloid-like images and headlines, MELVIN makes a splash.

stands out. Followed by more "news" items, pop culture articles, and even interviews with bands, the magazine manages to be funny most of the time, I found. Navigating the site is a bit of an exercise, however, as a clear table of contents is hard to find. Unfortunately, there hasn't been a new issue posted since June 1995. Too bad. –*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Schwa
http://fringeware.com/SchwaRoot/Schwa.html

What might be bizarre to you is deep brain food to some, and satire to still others. Schwa is whatever you want it to be, a movement of anti-culture or a space alien freak phenomena. The site is as ambiguous as the "movement" itself. Pictures of cartoony little grays (space creatures with big eyes) adorn the Gallery, while sound clips, press clips, and Schwa merchandise fill up the rest. It needs some color, and a suped-up spaceship logo gyrating across the top might be nice. But as far as originality and fun factors go, Schwa rocks! –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Giant Hatpin Collection
http://wnc.com/hemsath/hatpin.htm

Here is the work of someone who is either extremely patient or very obsessed. Or perhaps both. I can do nothing but revere this site, which functions as a tribute to one person's hatpin collection. View the top level group photo, or see the collection divided into categories – animals, military, boy scout, safety awards, etc. But the clincher is: Each and every one of these buggers also has a close-up treatment photo, for detailed inspections, no doubt. It's quite a spectacle. –*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

TOES
http://eclipse.bgsu.edu/~awelker/toe.html

Do you have strong feelings about toes? Love 'em? Wish that people had unremovable plastic molded boots like an action figure? This site includes a form that you use to post your feelings about toes and a page to read what other people have posted. No pictures of disgusting feet, no toe-related links, not even a listing of podiatry schools or foot fetish counseling centers. If you're going to tackle the oft-overlooked subject of our nethermost extremities, you've got to do it right. But for now, just go here and post stuff about fingers, the "Superior Digits!" –*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Tres Bizzare
http://ucunix.san.uc.edu/%7Esolkode/tres_bizar/

Sometimes there is a case to be made that a site is good, even without a shred of original content. This is beyond doubt one such case. Those questing for

Link to the Pope in the Porsche (http://www.polaris. net/user-www/bain/pope.html) from here.

"bizarre" sites on the Web no longer need to rely on casual coincidence (i.e., the occasional click to an unexpected surprise), but can now count on Dave's Tres Bizarre page. Dave hunts around for kooky sites and posts a new one each day. (He also archives the old ones.) And to his credit, the sites he chooses are, in fact, very kooky and creative, and will link you to the Web-O-Tainment you may be looking for. YeeHaw! Nice layout, too. –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Troquista Home Page
http://www.ph.utexas.edu/~ldevlin/troquista.html

Arm your guns, we're warriors in a monster truck shoot-out. The Troquistas have joined forces with other anti-Doctress fanatics to bring us this site – one of many, anti-Neutopian Web pages. (The Doctress is a bizarre Usenet newsgroup personality who spews utopian-like visions she calls Neutopia.) You gotta love these Usenet superstars. While the Troquista sect of the rebel force has a small page with some less-than-savvy design skills (links to ASCII text and a distracting background), it's possible you might not care about graphics by this point. The content is so very hysterical that it *should* be read. –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

corporate

Algor
http://www.algor.com/

What the hell is Algor, anyway? A quick glance at the home page doesn't reveal anything about the power behind the pages, but the links are appealing nonetheless. Several clicks in, it's finally possible to deduce that Algor makes software used for a variety of truly interesting scientific purposes like aerospace, chemical, and mechanical engineering projects. Probably most notable to non-PhD nerds surfing this site is the story of Dante II, the robot used to explore a volcano in Alaska in 1994. And guess what! Algor software was used in the design of the robot. Scientific self-promotion at its finest. –*DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

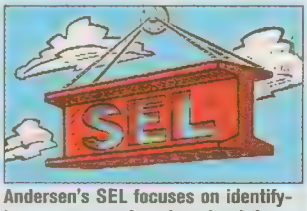
American Express University
http://www.americanexpress.com/student/

Remember those company-sponsored comic books designed to promote Product "A"? Remember how they came off as cheesy promotional attempts when Product A was integral in the resolution of the story? The American Express University achieves a similar tone by littering its pages with "benefits of membership" information. The supposed mission of this site is to provide useful information for college students, and the Let's Go travel section is really well done, though it's littered with references to American Express travel services, not to mention that the writing sounds like an older person attempting to "rap with the kids." –*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Andersen Consulting
http://www.ac.com/

Anderson is an international giant in the management and high-tech consulting industry. This means that some of the best and brightest minds around work on the Anderson payroll and Web site. If



Andersen's SEL focuses on identifying new ways of engineering information technology solutions for software design and development.

you're interested in technology, you'll find fascinating reading here, from tomes on the future of multimedia to analyses of retailing on the Internet. The site has a slight feel of having been thrown together rather than planned, but I didn't find that too much of a distraction. Job recruitment, technology discussion forums, and Internet news also make this site of value. –*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Bantam Doubleday Dell
http://www.bdd.com/

This electronic promotional vehicle for a company that to date has been focused on the medium of dead trees offers info

The Bantam site provides intimate visits with authors like Sara Paretsky.

on new releases, forums, a daily puzzle and horoscope, "visits" with authors, newsletters to subscribe to, and more. The catalog of Bantam Doubleday Dell's books in print is mildly entertaining to peruse before you head off to Waldenbooks. Somewhat interesting are the profiles of the featured writers and their tour dates.–*DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Blockbuster
http://pwr.com/blockbuster/

"The purpose of our Internet Web site is to give you the inside story of what's new and exciting at Blockbuster – but in an all-new way." So begins the Blockbuster

Blockbuster promises to show you what's new and exciting about itself.

Web experience. This is the electronic equivalent of an airline magazine, with less content and fewer pictures of far-away lands. The curious and movie-hungry will find monthly lists of top video rentals, profiles of soon-to-be released films, and the results of the World Video Game Championship. To its credit, Blockbuster does make this fluff available online in Spanish, too. –*SS*

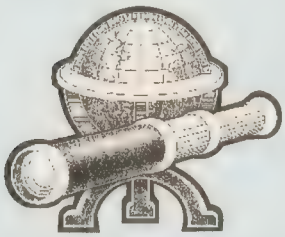
net rating: *overall:* **C**

Chrysler Technology
http://www.chryslercorp.com/ctc.html

Chrysler is evidently very proud of its testing facilities. Here you can learn all about them. Unfortunately, the site's editors chose boring pictures of wind tunnels instead of photographs of cars smashing into walls at high speeds. I enjoyed looking at Chrysler's concept cars, which always seem to be the ones I wished were in production. Of course, no corporate site could be complete without news releases, ad campaign info, and a section espousing the company's great environmental track record. Like the rest of the site, these sections are conservative and offer few surprises, but are presented well. –*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Codex Privacy Site
http://www.thecodex.com/
Playground for the paranoid. Codex offers electronic eavesdropping products and services, including things no one can live without, such as a Conference Room RF



Need some electronic eavesdropping equipment? Check Codex.

Shielding device. The site has a great section of links; anyone into conspiracy theory will love them. From Mossad to the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the links cover topics such as hacking, privacy, spying, and international intrigue. The site also offers practical information (such as how to tap a phone). You also have the chance to order an e-mail version of its catalog (I enjoyed it) or to subscribe to the newsletter. Don't miss the disclaimer in the How To section. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Digital Equipment Corporation
http://www.digital.com/
Home to Alta Vista, easily the best search engine of the Web, DEC continues as a force to be reckoned with in the computer world. Here you'll find the usual material from a high-tech corp's Web site – a letter from the big cheese, product info, and plenty of press releases for analysts and consultants. But if you're not a journalist hunting for background, a corporation with an equipment budget to blow, or a tech-head looking for work, go ahead and bookmark Alta Vista and leave the rest alone. The engine from heaven is hidden in the New Technology and Research section. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

FenderWorld
http://www.fender.com/
Guitar heroes will love this site. It contains a complete catalog of all things Fender, a

Learn when your Fender guitar was made here.

FAQ, Tech Tips, and miscellaneous guitar trivia. It also has the handy "Axe Dater:" Enter the serial number of your Fender and it tells you when it was made. Cool. An online version of its magazine, Frontline, features current artists and their Fenders. If you're so inspired, you can also subscribe to the magazine (and get a free bonus Bon Jovi CD), join the Fender Club, or check out the guitar links. Perhaps most fulfilling of the cultural insights: "Jam Out" has apparently replaced "Rock Out" as the appropriate term of guitar jubilance. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Maytag – Home of Dependability
http://www.maytag.com/
I never really liked the Maytag Man. Unfortunately, he's prominently featured in this site. Maytag provides a fair amount of information about its appliances – prices, warranty info, and general features, and it has a handy remodeling guide that gives the dimensions of each appliance. My favorite area of the site, the tips section, offers general suggestions on how to remove laundry stains and keep vegetables fresh in your refrigerator. I can't imagine a lot of people go appliance shopping on the Web, but if you need or want to, this is a good place to start. And there are pretty pictures! *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Official Guinness
http://www.itl.net/guinness/
This is a site no member of the cult of Guinness should miss. There are delightful treats to downloaded – a Guinness screen saver and wall paper composed of your favorite Guinness advertisements. There's also a Guinness FAQ to answer your age-old stout questions. So open a can of pub-draught, pull up a chair, and step into the virtual pub. *–BB*

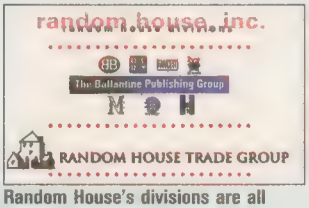
Simple but persuasive graphics decorate the Guinness site.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Peachpit
http://www.peachpit.com/
Peachpit, a publisher of books about computers, online communications, and the like, has a well-designed site. It's easy to find what you're looking for (great search engine) and there are no needless graphics. You can order online, but unfortunately the form isn't secure. Also, the descriptions of the computer books are a bit limited. But reader forums and a good technical support section add to the quality of this site. Even if you already own Peachpit books, especially the Macintosh Bible series, you'll probably want to check the site out. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Random House
http://www.randomhouse.com/
Want to browse Random House's book offerings by looking at titles, authors, and a brief description of each book? Well, you can't. To make up for this, there is an extremely well-designed search engine to navigate the extensive list of Random House titles. Of course, once you get the titles, you still don't find much information. The site does have good theme pages relating to some of the publisher's more popular current books. Here you'll find forums, links, and discussion. *–BB*



Random House's divisions are all housed at this Web site.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

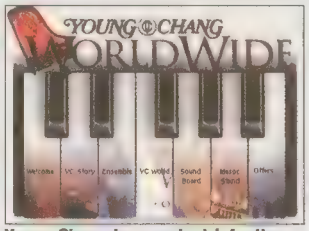
Westinghouse Science & Technology Center
http://www.stc.westinghouse.com/
Upon first look, this site only presents what appears to be a pithy overview of the deep research being conducted at Westinghouse. The Technology area lists confusing-to-the-layman codewords for the new high-tech developments. And each departmental link (Intelligent Systems, Microelectronics, etc.) leads to a happy photo of its respective manager summarizing (and hyping) his group's work in a brief paragraph. But link a little further into some of the areas – cryoelectronics, for example – and geek out with some intense scientific papers and reports from the men and women in the white lab coats. Bring your slide rule! *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

WWS World
http://www.wwsworld.com/
Morphing to the needs of the new media, advertising agencies are rushing to create Web sites to lure in even the most technophobic clients. Weiss, Whitten, Stagliano's site does the job nicely. Fun in a marketing company sort of way, yet with a professional, elegant "we mean business" appearance, this site is a no-apologies commercial for the abilities of this agency. With examples of its work for Giorgio Armani and Ferrari, this agency shows that it can walk the production walk just as well as it talks the Web talk. A worthy look at a good example from the industry that will help commercialize the net... whether we like it or not. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Young Chang
http://www.youngchang.com/
Young Chang is one of the largest piano makers in the world. Piano fans will find some items of general interest here, such as a section on how to find a piano teacher and listings of piano organizations. Descriptions of piano models, though, are limited to describing what types of finishes are available; too much attention is devoted to expounding why the company's manufacturing process produces superior pianos. There are a few silly sections, such as information on Young Chang's game-show giveaways. *–BB*



Young Chang has product info, tips, piano education resources, more.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

education

@School
http://www.atschool.com
If you are a K12 teacher with a fair amount of patience, amble on over to K12 World, a very tidy and useful site packed with Web resources. You'll need patience because there are two top pages for each topic, and the download can be mighty slow. But once you're in, you'll find classroom goodies; (Internet) library information; funding sources; lesson plans; and more. Especially cool is

@School is packed with resources for educators and students.

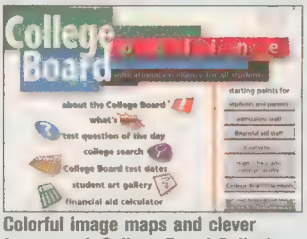
Internet Live, a page of live camera links and exploration events geared to eager students on the net. The Classroom area features several disciplines, so whether you teach science, journalism, or art, there are helpful links for you here. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Career Explorers
http://www.futurescan.com/
This site, launched by United Multimedia, a CD-ROM publisher, is designed to let (presumably young) visitors with an eye toward the future learn about various careers. Well... one career, anyway: right now, there's not much here. But the sole area, I Want to be a Veterinarian, covers quite a bit of territory: what training is needed, typical tasks, helpful skills, and so forth. The long blocks of small type may be daunting to young readers, though, and there are some minor HTML errors throughout. It will probably improve, though, soon enough, as more careers are added. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

College Board Online
http://cbweb1.collegeboard.org/index.html
The College Board oversees tests such as the SAT and AP exams, administers financial aid programs, suggests standards among its 3,000 member schools,



Colorful image maps and clever forms mark College Board Online's smart site.

and acts as a general intermediary between students and colleges. And now, many of its services are available via the Web, through colorful image maps, clever forms, and genius-level search engines. Separate indices direct students, guidance counselors, faculty, and member schools to the most relevant information. The technical level is high, making this a user-friendly entry to the intimidating world of college admissions. –*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Distance Learning Laboratory (DLL)

http://www.con-ed.howard.edu/WebPages/dll/

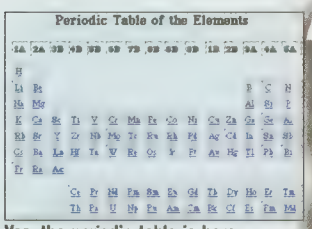
This site is part of a project to get historically black high schools and universities online with distance learning programs. The DLL wants to teach educators how to get online, set up Web servers, archive curriculum, and so on. Good idea! Unfortunately, you have to call DLL or register online for the seminars and workshops in order to actually learn something. The site is merely an informational pamphlet. Perhaps DLL staff might consider practicing what they preach, and offer the seminars online. –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

General Organic and Biochemistry

http://odin.chemistry.uakron.edu/genobc/

There are lots of Web sites designed to supplement college courses, but most of



Yes, the periodic table is here.

them fall just short of the mark. Not this site. Designed to supplement the textbook "Chemistry for Today," it includes dozens of concise and illustrative slides the professor used to compliment his lectures – and his use of Frames in presenting the material is inspired. He even includes a summary and form-based test. Visit his other classes via The Virtual Classroom at **http://odin.chemistry.uakron.edu/classroom.html**. And don't miss his "favorite excuses from students" page at **http://odin.chemistry.uakron.edu/excuses/**. –*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Global Online Adventure Learning Site

http://www.goals.com/

John Oman, a sailing adventurer, left the port of Seattle in November 1995 with the hopes of sailing around the world in 150 days via his 60-foot yacht. He may be alone at sea, but we've been invited to follow along via this Web site: Read his logs, check the current sailing conditions in his location, see pictures he's taken, and even consult maps indicating his position. As a result, we get a superb background in the nautical sciences. His isn't the only travelogue on the Web, but it's one of the most "realistic," with hard data augmenting his lyrical notes. This site is a must for all would-be seafarers. –*TG*

John Oman is the skipper of this site, which documents his sea journeys.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Media Literacy Online

http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/HomePage

Media Literacy is a movement to educate youth and adults about the media – how to use and maximize its benefits, and how to guard against its tricks. The Web site is a stockpile collection of, you guessed it, media literacy-related information available online. While there isn't an extreme amount of original content filling up the bandwidth (nor will you find snazzy graphics or HTML 3.0 wizardry), it is outstanding as a collection of resource links in one convenient place. With smart organization and enough color to keep us from getting the "Netscape Gray" blues, this is a very valuable site. –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Mr. Trockman's Earth Science

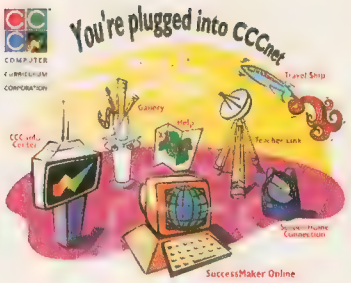
http://www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/mme/trockman/earthsi.html

Sure, this may just be the humble Web page of a humble eighth grade earth science teacher in humble Minnesota, but without a doubt, one may safely say: The Trock rocks! (all puns intended). Dan Trockman is obviously one wacky dude who knows how to make science fun. You'll find playful backgrounds of lava and snowflakes, as well as photos of volcanoes and blizzards (the Trock, in a flurry of photo-journalistic inspiration, even posted local Minnesota photos from last

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing*	*Smart*
Needs more juice	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

CCCnet

http://www.cccnet.com/



Look out, "Sesame Street," make way for the Internet and CCCnet. While CCCnet may not sport the likes of our yellow feathered friend, it's got just as much educational and entertainment value, and it's interactive! A leading publisher of multimedia education titles, Computer Curriculum Corporation wins the honor of being a Web site to providing original, interactive curriculum online. And it's accomplished this task with exceptional grace.

For starters, it looks great. CCN teamed up with the outstanding crew at vivid studios (**http://www.vivid.com/**) in San Francisco to create a high-resolution, creative, and astonishingly quick site. It's powered by a monster SGI server to add to the speed factor, so even those with slower connections can reap the benefits of nice graphics.

CCCnet offers lesson plans to teachers on a subscription basis – though no fees have been set yet. It also supports these teachers with a message board to interact with other teachers and post questions. The super bonus: For two hours everyday, there's a tech person live, online, to answer questions immediately. CCCnet also encourages parents to get involved with a "school-home" section. This way, parents get to participate in what their kids are learning and offer help and encouragement.

My favorite part: It strives to teach children not only about the subjects at hand – math, science, the environment, art, etc. – but also how to use the Internet and maximize the Web. Many of the assignments involve children using the Web actively to complete projects. Students are also encouraged to network and communicate with students at other schools involved in the program. Very cool.

The online project at press time, Energy Flow In Amazonia, teaches kids about life forms in the rainforest. The final assignment is to pick an organism (of the millions living in the Amazon, from protozoa to tiger), learn about it, and post its biography online, in a templated Web form. Kids from all across the country will be adding to the real-time food chain. Outstanding! This site is one of the most innovative Web accomplishments I've seen so far, and I can only hope it's positive precedence will be replicated many times over. Teachers, pay attention to these kats. –*BG*

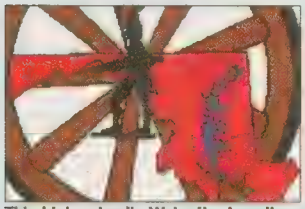
net rating: *overall:* **A+**

winter's arctic snow storms). All the levity is balanced with concise lecture notes for home-bound students. This is a model for using the Web to augment traditional curriculum. –*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

North Hagerstown High School
http://www.fred.net/nhhs/nhhs.html

Get acquainted with students and teachers at this central Maryland high school, population 1,000. A modest effort, the site promotes net education and communication. The ninth grade Prejudice Reduction Project, for example, invites



This high school's Web site describes itself as the "hub of better learning."

classes and students to send essays, bios, and URLs "that will help gain a better understanding of the world around us." There's also an Environmental E-Mail Project that lets readers report on environmental concerns "faced by your region or state." This could be a good resource for other teachers. –*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Princeton Review
http://www.review.com/

High school juniors and seniors who simply *must* attend the best universities would do well to visit this site presented by the "nation's leader in test preparation." That's right: The Princeton Review offers classes on preparing for standardized tests like the SAT, GRE, and MCAT, which will later get you into – guess what? – more classes. Study, study, study. Achieve, achieve, achieve. That's the Princeton way, but there's no disputing the Review's attraction if you aspire to a career in law, business, or medicine. A search engine eases navigation, but lengthy download times of frivolous graphics may leave you peeved. –*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

School Is Dead
http://pages.prodigy.com/S/C/D/School_is_dead/Learn_in_freedom.html

Not only are kids rebelling against formalized schooling, their parents are, as well; and, as sites we've reviewed in the Blue Pages have shown, there are plenty of Web resources out there for those interested in home schooling. But what about "no-schoolers"? For both groups, Karl Bunday's site is a convincing (although ugly) collection of quotes and arguments emphasizing that the one who learns best schools least. The points are presented as one heavily linked screed, making the site great for browsing, but it's hard to find specific information unless you use the index. –*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Thomas Edison State College
http://www.tesc.edu/

What home-schooling does for the under-18 crowd, "distance learning" colleges like Thomas Edison State do for those seeking higher educational degrees. According to the college's Web site, "students in any state or nation can earn credit for college-level knowledge acquired outside the classroom." It's a pity the college hasn't done more with its Web pages: considering how far-flung the students must be, the potential for Internet-based instruction is tremendous. Indeed, the site isn't nearly as deep or interesting as many other colleges', and the occasional misdirected link mars the experience. –*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Urban Education Web
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/

Learning about learning: that's what the Urban Education Web is about. It's part of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), a well-known and highly-respected database of studies on education. It, in turn, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. All these layers of support point to two attributes of this Web site: it's densely academic, and it's excellently supported. Here, you'll not only find out if the government has published information about gangs in the schools, you'll probably find the monographs themselves, hyperlinked internally and with other documents. I don't know what poor souls are sitting in a windowless office doing all this, but they deserve to be thanked. –*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Gifted School of Communication
http://www.misha.net/~desktop/washschl.htm

Can we talk adorable for a moment? This site is absolutely fun fun fun by way of enchanting graphics. Unfortunately, there isn't really much of interest otherwise, unless you're already involved with the school. The schedule of events, mission statement, and student bios are well done and seem helpful enough, but it's missing the original content that

Adorable, enchanting graphics, but not enough original info here.

makes a site interesting and worth repeated visits. I say, post the student artwork and stories, and up the ante a bit! After all, it's a site for a school of communication whose students are gifted. –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Worcester Polytechnic
http://ee.wpi.edu:8080/EE535/

Most online education fails because it tries to transplant subjects to the screen that are best-suited for the classroom. But Professor Cyganski's class at Worcester Polytechnic Institute has an edge of relevance here, as it's all about telecommunications transmission technologies. Since I'm not an electrical engineer, most of the highly-technical content of this site eluded me, but its basic "learning is as learning does" mission comes through loud and clear: Engineers should not be afraid of their tools. Or, as the prof says, "This course is not for WIMPs (Whining Internet/Multi-media Phobes)." Some of the meatier areas of the site are available only to WPI accounts, alas. –*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

film

All-Movie Guide
http://allmovie.com/amg/movie_Root.html

The All-Movie Guide is one of many Web-based searchable movie databases, which are sprouting up like the proverbial weeds, but it's better than most of them. It lets you browse by title, actor, mood, genre, country, or decade of release.

Search for that hard-to-find movie by title, actor, genre, year of release, and more at All-Movie Guide.

Scan a plot review and check out the critical rating. And there's a link to the All-Music Guide (**http://allmovie.com/amg/music_root.html**). This site, put together by a "small group of editors living in rural mid-Michigan" who work with 250 freelance writers, is helped by a great search engine. –*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Delta 9 Independent Film Resource
http://www.eden.com/~delta-9/index.html

For several peculiar reasons, Austin has become an independent film hotbed. Something about the Texas heat and the too-close Communist threat in Cuba seems to inspire every slacker, rube, and yahoo to write a screenplay. This Web space is a resource guide for the Austin film-making scene, listing available equipment, local contacts, open grants, and such. Austinites may find these pages worthwhile; others should look for similar structures in their own community. Be warned that the page boasts a manifesto. Thankfully, it is more a statement of principle, but the rule still holds: Art and manifestos do not mix. –*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Joe Bob Briggs
http://numedia.tddc.net/joebob/

"Adapt or die." Like all other species, celebrities are constantly engaged in a struggle for survival. Just as the rise of the Talkie destroyed many silent movie stars, so too will the Internet eliminate

The trailer park perspective marks Joe Bob's film review Web site.

those unwilling or unable to adapt. Joe Bob Briggs is one celeb who has gracefully made the transition to this Brave New Age. Visitors find both the insightful social commentary of the Joe Bob's America column and his more widely known Drive-In Movie Reviews. The Web proves itself a perfect medium for this endearing trailer park perspective. –*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Left-Wing Films
http://ccme-mac4.bsd.uchicago.edu/DSADocs/Films.html

Despite some borderline poor judgment selections (I'd hardly call *A League of Their Own*, with Madonna, a "left-wing" film), this is a decent list of films (with hyperlinks when available). The main purpose is to provide collectives and student organizations with a list of titles to present at campus theaters and events. The site is broken down with internal anchors (it's one long page, with periodic jump points to avoid the nap-on-the-scroll bar scenario), which divide sections – environment, feminism, sexual freedom, and so on. –*BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

MOVIENET
http://www.movienet.com/

Put together by the Goldwyn/Landmark Theatres, a division of the Samuel Goldwyn Theatre Group, MOVIENET lists movies and showtimes at its theatres

Find photos from Samuel Goldwyn films, like this one (*Two Friends*).

around the country (arranged by city). There's also Film Previews, which offers write-ups and photos, and Film Finders Buzz, which gives "insider" scoops on films and the people who make them. It's not visually dazzling, but it's practical and pretty informative. –*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Hitchcock Page

http://www.primenet.com/~mwc/

If you've ever seen *Rear Window*, and watched the first 20 minutes closely, and seen how each of the neighboring windows Jimmy Stewart is observing reflects the character of its occupant, you know the attention to detail Alfred Hitchcock put into his films. If you've ever sat through *Suspicion* and been completely mystified about whether Cary Grant was a killer or not, even after the ending, you know why they call Hitchcock the master of suspense. And if the final scene of *North By Northwest* – the train entering a tunnel – wasn't lost on you, you've got some idea of Hitchcock's sense of humor.

None of this has been lost on Mark Claunch, the creator of the Hitchcock Page, either. "Hitchcock's true genius was how he used all of the tools of film-making," Mark says to explain his admiration for the film-maker. Mark does more than present information about Hitchcock's films on this site; he offers a study of the art of film-making through a picture-by-picture breakdown of the shower scene from Psycho. This section of the site lets visitors the choice of going through the scene manually, clicking a link, or choosing the server-push option, which will automatically load the next still in the sequence. Though the pictures are small, there are more than 50 of them, so it does take some time to get through. The Filmography section of the site is a very nicely programmed listing of Hitchcock's 56 films, broken down by decade, with links to the Internet Movie Database for further information. At the bottom of this page, in a box titled Other Film Work, are films where Hitchcock did other work, such as Title Card Design (his first job in the film business). Of particular interest is the cameo section, which lists where all of Hitchcock's brief appearances in his films occur. (Hitchcock appeared as a bystander in 37 of his films.) Under Feedback, Mark has a form set up so people can vote on their favorite films and send him their own comments about the site or Hitchcock in general. The Awards section starts off with a list of Internet users' top 10 Hitchcock films based on the votes received in the Feedback section, placing the Internet community's vote above such petty organizations as the Motion Picture Academy. *–WKC*

net rating: ☺ *overall:* **A**

rec.arts.movies archive

http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mleone/web/movies.html

A FAQ is a FAQ and for the most part, neat-o images and suave design tactics are not to be expected. So, as suspected, this archive of the rec.arts.movies Usenet newsgroup is relatively dull to look at. Straight gray backgrounds with blue links to info about specific films (presented a la ASCII text, of course) is pretty much par for the course. Nonetheless, if you're a follower of the newsgroup or particularly interested in famous quotes, Oscars, or a few specific films, such as *Reservoir Dogs* or *The Looney Toons*, it's pretty packed. *–BG*

net rating: ☹ *overall:* **C**

Screen Shots

http://www.screenshots.com/

With slick design and smooth graphics, Screen Shots is a quick eye catcher. It

This site's motto: "Raw footage. Reel people."

has the look and feel of professional quality and corporate backing, but to my surprise, I found no advertising banners or distracting sales pitches. Catch up with your favorite actors and directors with RealAudio interviews, goof around with a Hollywood trivia quiz, or peruse new release film reviews. The site is fairly new, so some areas are still rather small, but to our advantage, what they've got so far is very good. *–BG*

net rating: ☺ *overall:* **A-**

The Film Zone

http://www.filmzone.com/

"Oh no," I thought, "not another Web zine dedicated to film and its followers." What a pleasant surprise to find well-written articles on a variety of subjects, organized in a thoughtful fashion – and making fine use of Frames, too. Foreign films, independents, animated works, and more

Great graphics and nice organization distinguish this site.

are treated right alongside the usual Hollywood giants. This site sent me down to the local video store in search of a half-dozen different titles – high praise. This page is a rare thing indeed: a film-devoted site worth visiting for its content as well as its images. *–SS*

net rating: ☺ *overall:* **A-**

Online Movie Guide

http://www.losangeles.com/

The first impression: gaudy. The second impression: confusing. But upon deeper inspection and reckless clicking, I found some useful information about films on TV and video, and reviews of films in theaters in Los Angeles. However, the reviews section is an atrocious eye sore – there's an obvious attempt to get everything on one page, even if it means requiring a magnifying lens to read it. Ouch. This service is also available for Chicago (**http://www.chicagowww.com/**), Denver (**http://www.denver.com/**), and New York (**http://www.newyorkwww.com/**). *–BG*

net rating: ☹ *overall:* **C**

PSYCHO

http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/1645/index.html

Ahh, the glorious fan page. Sounds and images from a favorite movie and a list of related links – what better way to demonstrate one's love of and adoration for a favorite subject? You'll find all of the usual here: reviews and critical commentary on "Psycho," a few sound files, and some MPEGs and GIFs. At one point, the creator even uses Web frames, proving my contention that frames allow the enthusiast to quickly make a bad site worse. A VRML version of the space is available as well. Lacking a VRML browser, I was unable to confirm my suspicion that VRML may be another tool of damnation. *–SS*

The Psycho site needs more content to qualify as a good fan spot on the Web.

net rating: ☺ *overall:* **C**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

Widescreen Movie Center
http://www.cheezmo.com/wsmc/
If you love letterbox film, this is your site. You'll find archives of letterbox films on TV and in the theaters, links to additional resources, and the real juice: a guide to which letterbox films will be on television each month (searchable by time zone and what cable channels, if any, you subscribe to). The layout is clean and simple, as the site is more of a functional database than anything else. And the logo at the bottom, Just Say No Steve Martin, is clever (in pretentious art film circles anyway). *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

gaming

CyberMUD
http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/user/r/e/rei/WWW/GAME/intro.html
CyberMUD is one of the first Web-based games (i.e., it's been up for more than a year). While it was certainly innovative and entertaining when it first appeared, the game has had no recent updating. It uses links to implement a choose-your-own adventure, whose plot centers around a real MUD gone mad. EEK! Scary stuff. You should skip this game unless it's really, really late at night, or your diet consists of Jolt and Twinkies. *–KT*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

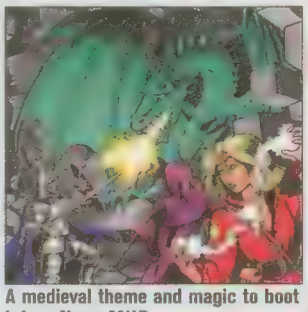
Elendor MUSH
http://www.where.com/Elendor/Welcome.html
Ah, Tolkien! Elendor is one of the most active MUSHes in Middle Earth. It is obvious from looking at the graphics on the site, however, that the Web master spends most of his time in a black-and-white, text-only universe. When I Telnetted into the MUSH for the first

This J.R.R. Tolkien-based MUSH relies on "one ring to rule them all."

time, I was almost immediately paged by a friendly person – well, it could have been an orc – who offered assistance should I need it. There is plenty of online help, and new users are encouraged to read newbie news. The Elendor MUSH seems like a great place to hang out, although it could be detrimental to grades or marriages. *–KT*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

NannyMUD
http://www.lysator.liu.se/nanny/
NannyMUD's home page is more extensive than Elendor's. This may be more indicative of long Swedish winters than any real necessity for such depth of content. That, and it's been around for almost six years.



A medieval theme and magic to boot infuse NannyMUD.

NannyMUD is medieval in theme, with magic thrown in for kicks. The home page explains the environment, some of the quests, and the technology used to create the MUD. There are also pictures of most of the wizards and even some mere mortals. The MUD itself seems much more goal-oriented than Elendor. *–KT*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Poker Variants
http://www.wolfe.net/~peter/poker/
When I used to play poker in college, I thought it was a pretty complex game, capable of confusing newbies as each dealer called a different game from a repertoire of about 10. Looking at this site and seeing the many games I'd never heard of has just made me again feel like a newbie. Peter Sarrett, who maintains the site, has the games divided up by type, such as "draw" or "stud." The programming is about as basic HTML as you can get, and there are no pictures at all, except for some ASCII diagrams of card layouts. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Rolling Good Times Online
http://www.RGTonline.com/
RGT is a gambler's dream. The site has a plethora of articles on all aspects of gambling, from betting on horses to casino games. You can vote on your top 10 gambling sites on the net, read reviews of various casinos, find out about laws governing gambling on the Internet, and follow along with the "Great Video Poker ADVENTURE." The article, "Poker Gets in Touch with its Feminine Side," was especially amusing, with suggestions for alternate names for the game like "Pokthem"

Insider gambling tips are just one of the offerings you'll find at Rolling Good Times Online.

and "Prod Them All." If you play too much, though, you may want to check out Gambler's Anonymous (**http://www.social.com/health/nhic/data/hr0900/hr0916.html**). *–KT*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Tankers Homepage Strategic Simulation Gaming and Military History
http://www.webspace.com/~tanker/

SITE OF THE MONTH net MAY 1996

War games are probably a guy thing. Moving cardboard counters that represent tanks, squads, airplanes, or ships around a board with the intention of outmaneuvering an opponent (commonly referred to as "the enemy"), all the while imagining the smoke and fire of battle, sounds pretty ridiculous on the surface, but it taps into some subconscious death struggle motif. The four or six hours it takes to play a game get swallowed by the intense concentration, the seriousness with which you contemplate moving the right elements of your forces to make a breach in the enemy lines that can be exploited.

Paul J. Calvi Jr. has been wargaming for more than a decade. He's also a graduate of the U.S. Army Armor School and the Armor Officer Basic Course at Ft. Knox. More recently, he's been working as a Web master. His HTML programming skills and his interest in military strategy have led to the Tanker's Homepage, which is probably the most complete source of war game information on the Web. There are game reviews, club listings, game release information, and articles on strategy and game design. Surprisingly enough, most traditional board war games haven't been converted into computer format. "The conventional wisdom has been that a computer game couldn't simulate the complexity of a board game," says Paul, "but I think that is a bunch of nonsense." Because war games take a lot longer to learn than most games, computer game companies "seem to believe that a realistic war game will not appeal to the masses." But a few recent arrivals on the computer war game scene have given Paul hope that the next two years will see a big expansion in the market.

The Tanker's Homepage has more than just games, however. A substantial portion of it is taken up by military history. Included are book excerpts and papers discussing wars from the Civil to the Gulf. One of the most fascinating areas are the veterans' stories – accounts from soldiers, sailors, and airmen about their combat and non-combat experiences. Rounding it all out is a section with reviews of war-related movies. Following the open discussion nature of the Internet, Paul publishes submissions, and runs two boards where users can post and reply on the site. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Game Cabinet
http://www.gamecabinet.com/
The Game Cabinet is a bare-bones zine devoted to board games. Each issue contains rules for various new games, reviews of games, and gaming sites – ones in the real world, you know, smoky cafés where old people sit around playing chess, and a few links to online games. The site could use a bit more organization. I had to scroll quite a bit to get where I wanted to go. But hard-core board game aficionados could definitely find something here. *–KT*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

health

Air-Medical
http://www.cris.com/~Seaox/
How exciting it would be to perform medical procedures of critical importance in helicopters and planes. I was instantly drawn to this site about being a flight nurse. Air-Medical covers education requirements, archives a monthly newsletter about the profession, links resources and organizations, and has a classified section for job openings at

Interested in becoming a flight nurse? Go here for details.

Florida Hospital. The design isn't so brilliantly executed; in fact, it's rather bland, but the info is interesting. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Borderline Personality Disorder Resource Page
http://www.dds.nl/~harwijn/
BPD is a form of mental illness marked by sudden rage and mood swings, self-destructive behavior, chaotic relationships, and the like. Here's a very thoughtful site that offers hope, information, and common sense for all concerned about the disorder. There are Internet resources – FAQs, mailing lists, and multiple Web pages – as well as a nicely annotated bibliography of lay and professional books on the subject. You can go to the archive of alt.support.personality to read more, or learn about the the AOL-specific folders and conferences (no links, though). It's maintained by two individuals who are providing a real service. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Lifelines Health Page
http://www.lifelines.com/
Lifelines is a fairly useful meta-site with lots of good links, some helpful tidbits, and a pleasantly light sales pitch. (The company makes various health maintenance products as an employee benefit program for other corporations.) Even

Find a good library of articles and links on health and nutrition at Lifelines Health Page.

knowing that, Lifelines offers a good library of annotated articles, regular newsletters, and pointers to medical, nutrition, and fitness links. These links are wide-ranging: from alternative healing to the American Medical Association, computer-related health issues to sports medicine to the World Health Organization. This page alone (**http://www.lifelines.com/medlnks.html**) is a good resource. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Names Project
http://www.aidsquilt.org
The "AIDS Quilt" is a huge AIDS education project that memorializes those who have died from the disease. This Web page (beautiful as it is valuable) for the Names Project, home of the Quilt, extends its educational value by offering statistics like these: 3,000 women are infected each day; 5 million *more* children will be infected by the year 2000; it's the leading cause of death for Americans aged 25-44. The Names project also produces traveling exhibits of portions of the quilt, now too large to be shown in full. (There will be a one-time

This beautifully designed site commemorates the patchwork quilt that remembers persons who died of AIDS.

display of the entire 33,000 panels in October '96 in Washington, D.C.) There's also information on making panels, related local events, and Names Project memorabilia. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

American Cancer Society

http://www.cancer.org/

net SITE OF THE MONTH MAY 1996

If there is a better-designed, more informative non-profit health site than this, I sure haven't seen it. Cancer.org for the American Cancer Society (ACS) is outstanding in just about every aspect. The layout and overall impact demand respect. And the amount of information archived here is astonishing.

On the top level, the ACS highlights four main areas: Golf; SmokeScream (anti-smoking propaganda); Breast Cancer Network; and How To Contribute.

I admit to being slightly confused at the significance of "golf" on a cancer information Web site, but it seems the ACS has a few clubs around the country that have a special deal for people wishing to contribute. Kinda dull, but wait, hang onto your seat for the rest of the ride – it's long, colorful, and full of medical facts, statistics, research data, grant resource info, links, and more more more.

Quite impressive is the SmokeScream area, which specifically targets younger net surfers. It's by far the brightest section with the coolest of cool graphics. Follow IkeMan, the hip icon-o-graphic mascot, as he gives us facts about smoking, invites us to play a "clean the lungs" trivia game, and answers questions in a "Dear Ike" column.

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
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It's a little funny that Ike, obviously a 30+ writer/editor type, is pretending to be a teenage hipster. He messes up a lot of the "cool" and "groovy" jargon with awkward, out-of-context type blunders, but overall, he tries. We'll give him points for that. And, besides, the message is good: Kids and adults shouldn't smoke cigarettes if they hope to breathe well for a long time. The SmokeScream area also plays some Netscape frames tricks, incorporates Macromedia's Shockwave, and offers a nice young people-focused link list.

The Breast Cancer Network is one of the online authorities for women's health. It's packed with statistics about breast cancer – who it affects, at what age, and survival rates. The site also offers diet and fitness recommendations, discusses several treatment options, and has a well-supported "recovery" section. The graphics here are simple, yet pleasing and quick. There will be no waiting around for graphics or image maps to load. Nice.

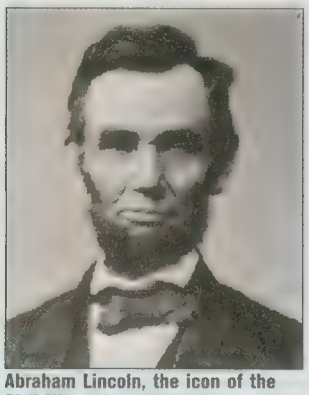
And while my Netscape browser tells me that transactions at cancer.org aren't secure, they still have an online donation form: Visa, MasterCard, American Express. Though I'm sure it's as safe as any of them, you might feel better committing to a little volunteer time instead – call the 800 number for details. This is a win-win site! *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

humanities

American Civil War
http://cobweb.utcc.utk.edu/~hoemann/warweb.html

George H. Hoemann and Mary E. Meyers' Civil War pages are basically just a collection of well-organized links. However, these links go mostly to outside servers,



Abraham Lincoln, the icon of the Civil War, adorns this site.

meaning that the material is less cohesive, and you'll occasionally be denied the information you want. When you can get it, though, most of these links are well-researched: Civil War buffs are notoriously fetishistic. And Hoemann and Meyers are qualified guides to this world of six score and 16 years ago. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

American Studies Web
http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davidp/archives.html

Every Web page has it: the obligatory list of links to other (questionably) relevant sites. The American Studies Web, however, is *all* links, to sites on matters as diverse as the U.S. Constitution, the San Francisco Diggers, and the great Irish famine of the mid-nineteenth century. It's a huge list, but rather disheveled: neither alphabetization nor subject organization seem to have sullied its pure anarchistic gestalt. Use the "Find" command on your browser if you're looking for specific information, and be sure to go up one level (to **http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davidpamstud.html**) for the whole experience. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Bertrand Russell
http://www.crl.com/~bpmac/russell.html

Mathematician, philosopher, agnostic, libertarian socialist – Bertrand Russell was a larger-than-life character. Created by Russell admirer Bruce McLeod, the page contains the text of a number of Russell's speeches and essays. You have to dig through some links to find a bio of this controversial and considerable intellectual, but it's worth it if you don't know him. Russell, who was British, was actively prohibited from lecturing on U.S. college campuses, vilified by the Catholic Church, and generally viewed as trouble by the establishment. You'll find several of his best-known pieces here, including "Why I Am Not a Christian," and "What Is the Soul?" *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Conceptual Metaphors
http://cogsci.berkeley.edu/MetaphorHome.html

Although designed for cognitive scientists, the Conceptual Metaphor site should be of interest to writers and anyone else who enjoys language. The metaphor system used isn't explained, but it isn't too hard to figure out from the content. There's the "source," the thing being defined, and the "target," the thing the "source" is being compared to. The site indexes metaphors by name, source, and target. It's an ugly, raw site, and the link to references listed the titles of three books without any more information. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Duke Papyrus Archive
http://odyssey.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/homepage.html

We're used to classical names for archival Web pages. But while Project Gutenberg isn't centered around that German bookmaker, Duke's Papyrus Archive is all about… drum roll, please… Egyptian papyrus! More than 1,300 papyri (yes, that's the plural) are cataloged here, with descriptions, translations, and images of the documents in two resolutions. These pictures were the most exciting part of the site for me: seeing the actual scraps of linen from which scholars have recon-

Gain access to texts about and images of 1,373 papyri from ancient Egypt.

structed an entire world. Fully searchable, although there's not as much cross-linking as there could be. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Electronic Journal of Sociology
http://gpu1.srv.ualberta.ca:8010/

Scholarly journals usually need to be spiced up, and the Web is a perfect way to do it. So why is the Web-only Electronic Journal of Sociology as dull as a two-pound brick of paper? It has all that you'd expect to find in a paper journal: abstracts (in tiny, unreadable type), articles, and references. But no pictures, no search engines, no indices. Well, there are some smart messaging features, which allow visitors to make comments, but at the moment, there's not much traffic there. The articles are good, but the presentation needs work. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Greek & Roman Cities of Western Turkey
http://rubens.anu.edu.au/turkeybook/toc.html

Michael Greenhalgh, a Professor of Art History at the Australian National University, is one academic who has embraced the Web and its possibilities by choosing to electronically publish his book on ancient cities in Turkey before the print version came out. It's a fascinating and well-researched topic, but it really lacks in that none of the archived pictures is linked to their references in the text. Also, it's a perfect test of the viability of publishing lengthy texts on the Web, and having people read them online. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Irish History
http://wwwvms.utexas.edu/~jdana/irehist.html

Sometimes you come across a Web site that impresses with the depth of one person's passion and dedication. Such is the case for the Irish History on the Web site, managed by Jacqueline Dana. At first

Irishman Oscar Wilde's tomb is recalled in the section profiling his life.

blush, it seems like the usual collection of links: but what makes this site unusual is that (a) the links are well-organized and relevant, and (b) a lot of the linked material is by Ms. Dana herself. There's an unquestionable bias toward Irish nationalism, but whether you're for or a'gin' it, the history alone makes this site worth a visit. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

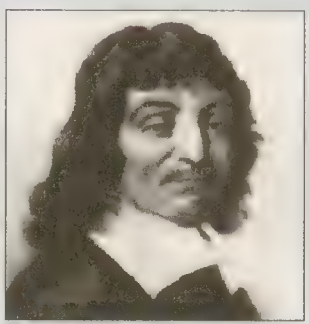
Media History Project
http://spot.colorado.edu/~rossk/history/histhome.html

Marshall McLuhan alerted Americans to the intricacies of the media, and watching the watchmen has since become a popular sport. The Media History Project is a great place to learn the basic histories of the telephone, TV, music, comics, and other methods humans have developed to get the word out. Colorful icons and sharp writing egg you on to further discovery, but some links are sadly broken, and the multicolored text is hard to read on some monitors. Teachers will wet themselves over the included syllabi, anal retentives will dig the site's organization, and all will be edified. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Mind and Body
http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/Mind/Table.html

Mind and Body is the catalog from a 1992 exhibit of the same name at the National Library of Medicine on Rene



Starting with Rene Descartes, this site explores mind/body dualism.

Descartes, the origins of mind/body dualism, and the development of the field of psychology in America. In a very scholarly style, the largely text site describes how Descartes came upon his findings and how the scholarship of philosophy then changed. If you know nothing about the subject, you might want to do some basic reading in philosophy first. If the subject interests you, you'll probably find some new info within the site, which includes illustrations and portraits from the exhibit. Not for the non-reader. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Origin of Knowledge
http://www.hsr.no/~onar/

Onar Am, the author of this densely written page, is a composer, mathematician, philosopher, and systems theorist. If that weren't enough, he has put down his ideas about all of these things into a series of articles available at his site. I'm impressed by Onar's depth and range, but not his writing style. (O.K., he's Norwegian, but his English is suspiciously academic.) The problem isn't his unfamiliarity with English as much as the stilted formality he uses – there's a lot of the royal "we," for example. But if titles like "Stabilizers in Dynamical Systems" and "Perspectivism Applied" turn you on, Onar may be your man. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Pattern of Knowledge
http://www.tiac.net/users/kba/pok.html

Art Bardige of Cambridge, MA offers up an elaborate and thoughtful theory about the history of human invention. It's a noble attempt. Enter into Bardige's construction. The meta-chart is too tidy and clipped for me, but the text is interesting, if biased (remember, you've been warned). He feels that the years 1859-1865 "were the most extraordinary in all human knowledge," based on this output: Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and Marx's *Das Kapital*, among others. If you like this kind of thinking, come in for a read far removed from the daily grind. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

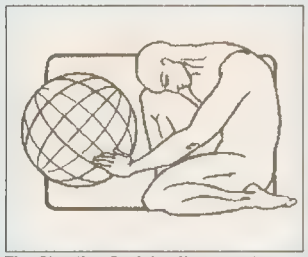
Rhiz-o-Mat
http://www.arts.ucsb.edu/~messiah/rhizomat/rhizomat.html

The core of this site, the actual Rhiz-o-Mat, is nothing more than a Web quote generator, drawing from the book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, by Deleuze and Guattari, two modern social critics. It's a particularly annoying generator because the pages are set to auto-reload with a new quote at too rapid a speed to let you read the entire quote. The rest of the site is not technically part of the Rhiz-o-Mat, but it's incredibly strange and funny, and any trip to the Rhiz-o-Mat will likely propel the viewer into other areas of this unique space. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Skeptics Society
http://www.skeptic.com/skeptics-society.html

"I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human



The Skeptics Society site promotes science and critical thinking.

actions, but to understand them." The Skeptics Society has adopted these words of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza as its motto. The Society publishes a magazine and holds regular conferences to investigate cultural and scientific ideas on religion, conspiracy theories, life after death, urban myths, and paranormal events. Its page includes selected articles from the magazine, plus papers, interviews, and an excellent reference page of other skeptical sites. A thoughtful and low-key presentation is what you'll find here, as befits intelligent skeptics, which these folks seem to be. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Soviet Archives Exhibit

http://sunsite.unc.edu/expo/soviet.exhibit/soviet.archive.html

This archive of Soviet documents is arranged around a museum analogy: Go directly to either of the two "floors," or follow the golden footsteps for a guided tour of Soviet history during the last 80 years. Unlike a museum, however, the site lacks a lot of pictures, although the knowledgeable guide's talk is full of imagery. Be warned: The site requires a lot of reading. Missing are the songs, photos, and personal reminiscences that would humanize such a tour; also, the text is so biased toward Cold War ideas as to threaten its credibility as a history text. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

SPEED

http://www.arts.ucsb.edu:80/~speed/

SPEED is an online zine which, in its own words, "provides a forum for the critical investigation of technology, media, and society." That's a tall order, but SPEED seems to be up to it. The young publication combines the critical writing of an academic journal with the hit-and-run graphic style of *Wired*, giving both immediate appeal to the eye and delayed gratification for the brain. As of February, only two issues were up, so stay tuned. But how long can they keep this up? Better visit now before everyone there gets burned out. *–TG*

Cool graphics and good writing make SPEED appealing.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Spoon Collective

http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/

The University of Virginia, sponsor of the electronic version of the excellent *Journal of Postmodern Culture*, runs a number of mailing lists under the name Spoon Collective. The lists cover the latest topics and authors of cutting-edge cultural criticism and philosophy, such as Baudrillard, Bakhtin, and Film Theory. The postings to the lists are archived, along with general info and longer papers, and, for some topics, a Web page has been built. Follow the instructions to join a list, or just satiate your intellect with the archives. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The New STOA

http://www.cs.latrobe.edu.au/~doug/generic/generic.html

"When Computer Scientists Discover Philosophy" on the next Geraldo. The proposition of this site, a modern version of Stoic philosophy, is pretty intriguing. The site's author claims Aristotle and Plato forced a division between philosophy and science, while his revived Stoicism brings them back together. The pages make it seem like an actual movement, but a look at the "Core Papers" section shows only one author, who also happens to run the site. *–WKC*

The pre-Socratic Stoic tradition rules at The New STOA.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Viking Navy

http://www.digalog.com/viking/

It's a pity when passion gets subverted by incompetence. That's the situation with the Viking Navy Web page, a sorry advertising vehicle for a fascinating project. In brief, Californian Peter Sjolander is engaged in building Viking-style boats to "perform as well today as they did 1,000 years ago." The site includes some photos, drawings, and descriptions of his experiments, but his appalling writing and HTML coding make the juicy fruit of his experiences inaccessible. Serious nautical history buffs and scholars may find this site interesting, but the casual Web browser would do best to skip it. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Wittgenstein and His Children

http://www.techline.com/~john7/wittgenstein/

A photo as you enter this site encapsulates its tenor well: It's an image of twentieth-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein with an angel's halo above his head. Deification of the individual aside, this site offers very little in the way of hard information: Mostly, it's a space for people to discuss The Man And His Works using the NetForum messaging system. In that regard, the site is moderately successful, although there's not much chat going on (c'mon, folks! it's a sexy topic!) and some of the links are broken. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

lifestyle

Intentional Communities

http://www.well.com/user/cmty/index.html

Intentional Communities has an honorable history and a pretty good Web site. The notion of shared living today is brought to us by earnest folks who want to find better ways to live together, share resources, and create ecologically and environmentally smart living arrangements. These might include housing coops, land trusts, and eco-villages as well as actual communes. Here you'll find articles, listings and descriptions, events, and products from and for communitarians. As you might expect, the crew building this site, sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, keeps a regular diary (with links) of their Web updates. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Retirement Net

http://www.retirenet.com/

Shame on you, Retirement Net. All you've given us is a brochure with some warm fuzzy photos (and fuzzy-headed marketing copy), and a lower-48 U.S. map with five (or is it seven? the map and text links don't match) states from which to choose. So we pick a place to start thinking about where we'll retire, and then all we get is a list of your "managed care properties" in each state – name, address, phone number. Period. We don't think we'll leave our retirement planning to you – or call your lame Java-enabled 800 number for more info, either. *–KW*

Despite bright pictures, this site needs more specific info on retirement.

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Spirit-WWW

http://www.spiritweb.org/

If you're curious about spiritual matters broadly defined, gravitate to Rene Muller's Spirit Web. This gent has built a thoughtful and useful site featuring articles, a helpful glossary, and links to more info on topics like yoga, meditation, UFOs, reincarnation, and channeling. He has selected a number of articles and essays for each topic, so you get a variety of voices. And he includes a metaphysical bibliography, an event calendar, relevant e-mail contacts, and "spiritual Web chat," where you can discuss beliefs and mysteries with others. An excellent stop for the open-minded and spiritually inclined among us. *–KW*

Channeling, lightwork, reincarnation, and more are explored here.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Teen Home Page

http://www.cloud9.net/~thorpy/TEEN.HTML

Clearly well-intended, this page is a big disappointment for its target audience of teenagers, who must be cool at all costs, and could easily hoot this site off the Web en masse. Our anonymous HTML beginner doesn't spend enough time finding links (there's way too much plain text here) or hanging with the gang that embodies the ideal teen. If you feel clueless, you might want to check off "the top five colognes guys like to wear" (there are six listed). But if you have a semblance of a clue, you'll be at a fun music or entertainment site, and not here. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

The Millennium Matters

http://www.newciv.org/millennium_matters/

Feeling anxious about global warming, virus outbreaks, or over-population? Run, do not walk, to The Millennium Matters for a long perspective on these and other crises affecting Planet Earth. Millennialists come in all shapes and dogmas; it's safe to say they believe that virtually all our daily experiences point to the end of life as we know it. Many of these pages cover UFOs, New Age spirituality, and communalism; the links offer further reading, FAQs, newsgroups, and the like for a wide, wide array of subjects. If nothing else, dip into these pages to get a vivid taste of a culture in the making. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

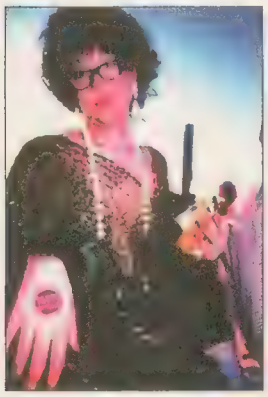
CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

The Data Lounge

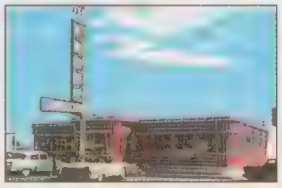
http://www.datalounge.com/trudy/index.html

Why are drag queens always in the desert these days? There was Priscilla, Queen of the Desert; there was Patrick Swayze playing Vida Boheme; and now there's Trudy, host of the Data Lounge. Is it that our culture responds to this juxtaposition between the raw natural and the extremely artificial because the industrial revolution has filled our lives with manufactured goods? Or is it that nothing in those vast open spaces can upstage a drag queen's fabulous couture? Trudy knows.

Trudy is an exiled Manhattanite glamour queen on a mission of destiny to add color and style to the Arizona desert. The Data Lounge is her little spot of culture in those arid lands, where she logs onto the Internet to write entries into her Dearest Darling Diary, respond to Calling Cards, and post 'Lectric Letters. Her diary tells the tale of how she packed her bags and left Manhattan, traveled into the desert, and had many adventures going into Los Angeles or back to New York for Wigstock. Calling Cards are where we, Trudy's admiring masses, can send her our comments or pleas for advice, and if grace is smiling upon us, she will post our words with her reply. Some of Trudy's special friends, whose missives get posted in 'Lectric Letters, are Mr. Jewel, who keeps Trudy informed by writing her about the various Broadway shows he sees; Sage, who writes Trudy poems and has intimated that Trudy is her mother; and the Marquessa Areta von Kass, who tells Trudy of her dating tribulations.



But are these electronic words enough for one such as Trudy, once the premier socialite of Manhattan? Can the lizards and cactus compare to the fashionable boys and girls walking down Fifth Avenue? Of course not, but at least Trudy has Sir Lancelot, her faithful German Shepherd, to keep her company on those long desert nights. But not to worry that anything untoward is going on, that Sir Lancelot's doggy innocence is being taken advantage of. He's got his own section at the Data Lounge, where he offers his opinions on politics and the state of his digestion.



But Trudy can't be online all the time to help those less fortunate, as the desert wind would make her skin positively ruddy if she didn't take time out to put on a moisturizing mask. To give her time for beauty, a clever little bit of programming, the Draginatrix, takes over while she's away. By answering a series of questions, the Draginatrix will provide the user with a whole new drag queen makeover. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Trudy's

literature

Anne Rice
http://www.cyserv.com/pttong/rice.html

It has been a slow week. I've met two people who believed themselves to be vampires, and only one person claiming to be a werewolf. The phenomenon is tapering off; isn't it time Anne Rice came out with a new novel to stoke the flames? This is another Rice page: vampires, mummies, spooky undead, and so forth. A few of her books are profiled and there are the ever-present related links. There is no reason to visit this page, a damning indictment indeed for a space built by a self-described Web programmer and HTML designer. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Electronic Beowulf Project
http://portico.bl.uk/access/beowulf/electronic-beowulf.html

The original manuscript for *Beowulf*, the English masterpiece starring Grendel the monster, was badly damaged in a fire 200 years ago. Taking the remains out of its display case in the British Library for scholarly study is obviously not the best idea. But in a hint at the future of the library, it gives us the Electronic Beowulf Project, which is focused on scanning and analyzing the parchment to create a complete digital version of the document for study. With tons of related research and articles being added constantly, the Electronic Beowulf Project is an example of electronic media's power to archive artifacts from the pre-digital era of the written word. *–DP*

Digitizing Beowulf helped the British Library share the wealth of this first great English masterpiece.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

H.P. Lovecraft
http://www.primenet.com/~dloucks/hplpage.html

Cult horror novelist H.P. Lovecraft has found a worthy hidden home in this well-designed and clear site. Of course, a complete list of Lovecraft's tales is presented, but the most interesting elements of this site are the "readings" of Lovecraft's work. With the author's numerous references to numerous medieval texts containing secrets that "man was not meant to know," it can be difficult to discern between the actual dark manuscripts of our past and those that only have a history in Lovecraft's mind. Put simply, the Necronomicon is fiction. (We think. heh, heh, heh...) *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Heart of Darkness and Apocalypse Now
http://www.georgetown.edu/irvinemj/english016/conrad/conrad.html

"Heart of Darkness" is one of the most dense and murky short stories ever written, and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is a marvelous film adaptation of the work. A trip down a river becomes a metaphor for a journey to the darkest places in the human soul, an exploration of those fragile structures upon which civilization is constructed. This site offers the entire text of "Heart of Darkness," searchable by keyword. In addition, there is a link to one of the most complete *Apocalypse Now* fan sites. All Conrad fans should visit this site at least once, if only to grab the e-text of the story. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Horror In Literature
http://131.252.12.160/~caseyh/horror/book.html

Clive Barker? Stephen King? Young punks, both of them. When it comes to horror, only one name matters: H.P. Lovecraft. To my delight, I did find Lovecraft on this site, as well as many other personal favorites. Billing itself as a horror archive, this space offers a list of someone-or-another's Top 100 horror books, a large collection of links to author-related home pages, and a few excerpts from recent novels. Of greatest interest are the visitor submissions, offering a chance to peruse the bad and worse in surfer-submitted horror. You should never pass up a chance to read another's horror fiction. *–SS*

Find links to horror stories on the net, plus lots more, at this horror archive.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Jack Vance Archive
http://www.hw.nl/~remy/

Fans of award-winning Sci-Fi and Fantasy author Jack Vance will be in the Web world of their dreams after a visit to this site. The archive's comprehensive bibliography of Vance's published novels, short stories, and collections is a much-needed resource for anyone familiar with the extremely prolific writer. Looking for a first edition of *The Languages of Pao*? A marketplace for rare Vance artifacts is under construction on the site, and will surely be a welcome resource for the dedicated Vance collector, earthbound or otherwise. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Neveryóna
http://www.organic.com/Staff/ogd/neveryona/index.html

I am sick and tired of pretentious book-

snobs maligning the integrity of the science-fiction and fantasy genre. I hate loud-mouthed know-it-alls who consider Proust the standard by which all text should be judged. This is a Samuel Delany fan page, featuring the requisite bibliography and critical pieces. Though there is nothing particularly striking about the layout or content of the site, the page creator seems articulate, a rare quality among fan site maintainers. Maybe there is cause to hope the Web may someday improve in quality. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Romantic Notions
http://wwide.com/rnotions.html

"Who among us has not wondered...what if?" And so begins the online version of the Romantic Notions newsletter, a review of the latest in Angel, Ghost, Time Travel, and Vampire romance stories. Numerous book reviews and a brief interview with an author did nothing to inspire my curiosity, but those with an interest in tales of eternal love overcoming the shackles of time itself may find this site rewarding. I am compelled to point out the background color in use here, one of the most tasteful – and subject-appropriate – which I have encountered on the Web. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Steinbeck
http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/steinbec/srchome.html

Steinbeck's popularity among high school English teachers is only to his misfortune. There are too few instructors capable of placing Steinbeck's work within a historical context, and unfortunately, this site will do little to assist the individual trying to decipher Steinbeck and his catalog. Visitors find a bibliography, a timeline of

See photos of the houses Steinbeck lived in, like the one he was born in.

his life, photos of the houses Steinbeck stayed in, and a few images of the landscapes in which the stories were set. Those researching Steinbeck's taste in dwelling places will enjoy this site; others should do a net search. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Infinite Goof
http://www.rain.org/~da5e/tom_robbins.html

It is a curious phenomena: Nearly every existentially-aware, self-reflective female I know adores Tom Robbins. And few, if any, of the similarly enlightened males I know can stand him. This is a Tom Robbins fan site, but is in no way a typical fan page. Of course, there is a bibliography, critical essays, interviews, and related links – but that's just the beginning. This is a fan site with Java objects, and a VRML version too! At last, an adoring fan space that is entertaining *and* fawning. Bonus points for not using frames! I hope my exclamatory prose conveys my delight with this site! *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

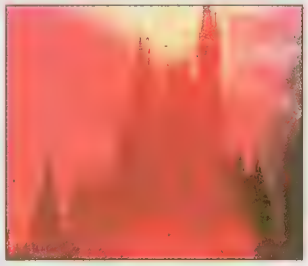
The Papa Page
http://www.ee.mcgill.ca/~nverever/hem/cover.html

Hemingway was a one-trick pony who drank away what little talent he did possess, but that isn't reason enough to dislike this page. No, the client-pull embedded in the opening page inspired my ire. It annoys me when my client requests a document without my permission; call me a control freak, but I prefer to make these decisions. A short biography, a bibliography, a variety of related links including one to RealAudio files of the Old Man himself; this is a typical fan page. This site is a solid, if unexciting, source of information on the bearded suicide. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Scott Gallery
http://haven.uniserve.com/~mscott/

Michael Scott has finally brought his unique melding of photography and poetry to the Web. (Never heard of him?



An example of the photos by Michael Scott you'll find here.

Neither had I.) Anyway, Michael has graciously organized his textual and visual artworks under a half-dozen themes, including love, war, philosophy, and others. The photos – birds, flowers, raindrops on a branch, etc.– are quite serene and well shot in a New Age postcard kind of way. The accompanying poetry is extremely melodramatic. Michael says he's offering his work as "an oasis of positive thought on the Internet." With that in mind, his page deserves a look just for the karma alone. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Todd's Great Big Stupendous Poetry Page
http://bigdog.engr.arizona.edu/~harrist/poetry.html

Forget coffeehouses, people, the Web is the new home for good (but too often really bad) poets: This page overflows with what Todd the poet calls his "Random Poetry," and he deserves kudos for taking the DIY approach to publishing his verbiage. For a hint of what's in store, check out "The," a Todd masterwork that really touched me. Todd better be careful, though. Some of his contributors may edge him out in the absurd poetry arena. Take "Tablet Junker" from Amanda Parks for example: "Michael Jacko /Is a wacko/ He went smacko/In a cracko /Now he's backo/He gets slacko/I think his new album is okay." Yeah... Dig it. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Virtual Urth
http://www.users.interport.net/~cezanneh/

Someone spent a great deal of time building this site. More specifically, someone spent a great deal of time determining which background and text color combinations are most indecipherable, and then gleefully constructed a site based on that information. This is a poetry/literary 'zine, and I do wish I could have explored more of it. Unfortunately, poor HTML coding practices made for a mess while once again proving my first Law of the Web: Frames are almost always a force for evil. The situation grew horrible enough to bring my Netscape 2.0 crashing down, carrying with it several Telnet sessions and my mood. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

William Gibson's Yard Show
http://www.vkool.com/gibson/index.html

Cyberpunk is nothing but a rehashed 1930s futurism coupled with a fetishizing of Intel's latest products. Espousing this creed, I approach with trepidation anything vaguely connected to William Gibson. As I wandered the site, my unease turned to confusion, then curiosity, and finally bemusement. I'm not certain what any of this has to do with Gibson, but I like it. Peculiar images of keyboard-playing sociopaths and detailed critiques of 50s era Atomic Disintegrator toys vie for the visitor's attention. Admittedly, there are more than a few empty links, but the oddity factor is more than enough to excuse the mess. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

media

7 AVENUE
http://BYTESIZEMAG.COM/7AVENUE/7AVENUE.HTM

Fashion victims now have a Web site full of advice. Take a stroll down 7 Avenue for tips on winter fashion, stylish eyebrows, and even the comeback of the ponytail. The content isn't extensive, but it is informative for anyone wanting to know why camel coats have invaded the runways. Download

Sequins and satin make for glamourous evening wear, says 7 Avenue.

photos of models strutting their stuff or follow links to advertisements from Armani, Hermes, and even The Gap. The 7 Avenue site needs more articles and features to keep fashion fans and phobes interested in staying longer than just a few minutes. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Culture Zone
http://www.culturezone.com/

If you feel like a hick without hauteur, maybe a trip to the Culture Zone is what you need to feel hip again. The mass of image maps and eye candy promises to restore online excitement sucked out by other not-so-savvy sites. However, unless you have an ISDN line, prepare to wait a while for graphics to load. Speed along the Wailing Highway, or hop the Groovy

Eye candy and hip Netscape trips make Culture Zone a feast.

Train to download alternative music sound samples. Read casino poetry in the Celluloid Cafe. The Zone has so many twists and turns, a pro cybersurfer could drown in an entertainment tidal wave. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Ferndale
http://www.ferndale.com/

If you're already bored with talk show guests ripping out their hearts to entertain viewers, check out the Ferndale Webumentary site. This is a cross between a talk show and a soap opera, masking itself as an authentic Web experiment. Listen in on "real" therapy sessions via RealAudio, or snoop through staff and resident journals. Take online personality tests and chat with one of the residents. The staff at Ferndale wants to hear your deepest secrets. Many of the therapy sessions try to be humorous when they're just hooey, but the journal entries will make you wonder why some of the staff members weren't committed with the residents. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

New York Times
http://www.nytimes.com

The News York Times prints all the news that's fit to print... online. This is one of

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

the best national daily newspapers online that uses hypertext to explain articles in-depth. Read about the latest news, or go into a feature about Internet legislation. The newspaper requires you register at the beginning in order to read everything, but it's worth it! The photos capture moments of tragedy and triumph. Who said newspapers were going out of style? –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

New York Trash
http://www.nytrash.com/

Most tourists remember New York City for its smell more than for its taste, and online, it's no different. New York Trash is the seedy guide to a city with no party limits. Get the dirt on the bands, bars, and behavior that keeps New York City fun and trashy. The guide a la dumpster is sectioned off by Migraines (weird rants), Earaches (music reviews), Eyesores (party pics), and Cramps (Internet links and guest book). Even Blondie's Debbie Harry has her own section of photos and handwritten lyric scans. Dive into this dumpster site for the goods on the Rotten Apple. –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

PC World News
http://www.pcworld.com/cgi-bin/w3com/start?pcw+main

As the "Online Personal Computing Authority," *PC World News* magazine has good reason to toot its own horn. Get tips on selling old computers, find out which new PC is the best buy, or read hardware reviews on scanners, motherboards, and printers. *PC World News* requires readers to fill out a survey so they can access even more articles. Help bring the computer world a little closer to your desktop with this valuable, online resource. –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Supermodel.Com
http://www.supermodel.com/

Even supermodels can be geek girls. Read about your favorite leggy lass on the Supermodel Home Page. SuperModels in the Rainforest is a special section meant

She speaks! Supermodel Monika Schnarre has a RealAudio message.

not only to show beautiful models prancing around the trees but to teach us about the fragile ecosystem, animals, and native peoples. Another section introduces visitors to one of Ford Modeling Agency's Supermodel of the Year, Monika Schnarre, with insights on her make-up tips and fashion secrets. Parts of the site are still under construction, but the elaborate quality of the home page suggests supermodels can walk down the Information Superhighway just as gracefully as a fashion show runway. –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The East Village
http://www.theeastvillage.com/

The East Village site is to New York City as the book *Tales of the City* is to San Francisco. This site is a diary of a party kid, Eve, who's destined to take a bite out of the Big Apple. Meet her friends and lovers as she explains her life from a bar stool. On the design front, The East Village accents text about bad weddings and bitter relationships with magnificent photos of New York at night. The site has a while to go before it makes much sense to the average online wanderer, but this is one apple Eve doesn't mind pushing on to another Internet Adam. –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The MESH
http://www.albany.globalone.net/theMESH/

Internet news and culture blend well in The

Even Internet know-it-alls will be enlightened by this site.

MESH. This monthly newspaper features articles, reviews, columns, listings, and news. Read editorials on the growth of the Internet, follow advice on getting the most out of your e-mail, or learn about cyber-fraud and how to prevent it. Sign up for MUG News Service to get a free disk full of articles, reviews, tutorials, clip art, news, and other information. MESH is a magazine "written by cyberusers for cyberusers," and will enlighten even the most arrogant of Internet know-it-alls. –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

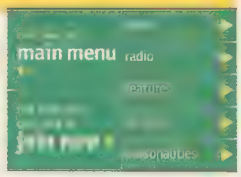
The Spot
http://www.thespot.com/

Seven strangers live in a house... This is their story of love, lust, and landlords. Haven't we heard this story before? The Spot tries to accomplish what MTV's "The Real World" doesn't have the guts to do – take a bunch of whiny kids living together and make them gripe online. Ironically, The Spot isn't as "real" as MTV, and it has even more advertising attached. The introduction explains how dead celebs such as Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, and Jim Morrison hung out at the real Spot house. Egads. The design layout is mind-blowing, but the overly contrived characters all might as well be brain-dead. –*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

c|net online

http://www.cnet.com **personalities**



C|net has, beyond doubt, one of the best sites on the Web, and most certainly offers the best of media-related pages. It's an example of where online publishing can go, is going, and should be. c|net online, a division of the television network, is easily as solid in content, and perhaps nicer, because you get to choose if you want to "watch" the commercials. Get your technology-related news from work or home, or anywhere you happen to have a copy of Netscape 2.0. I highly recommend using Netscape: The site backs its content with outstanding design, making full use of Netscape's enhanced features – Forms, Tables, text formatting, multimedia goop, and should I go on? If it's possible, it's there.

c|net should be read like a newspaper – every day. With a full-time staff working hard to bring us the best of the best tech-related news, there's no chance you'll miss the hottest headlines. The site is constantly updated and also sports a wonderful, searchable, archive of past articles in case you have missed something. The features are, of course, well-written and concise, offering a slew of hyperlinks to connect you to additional information, and as you might suspect, the site also has plenty of pictures that look high-rez but take up minimal bandwidth. Sift through mounds of daily features, listen to reports via RealAudio, get personality profiles of the movers and shakers in the tech arena, and whatever you do, check out the reviews section. If you're looking for good advice on products or Web sites, these cats will guide you to the action. c|net test drives modems, e-mail clients, and Web authoring tools, and it picks a site of the day – always cool and useful. More. More. MORE!

c|net also has regular updates an how to find a job, resources for women online, a kids' section, and on and on it goes. While a site this full with so much serious content runs the risk of being too dry, boring, or staid after a few repeated visits, make no mistake: c|net is interesting, insightful, intelligent, and entertaining – consistently. And, in addition to all its offerings about news and Web technology, c|net is also responsible for software.com (a mega-database for freeware and shareware) and DREAM technology (for intelligent agent interactive advertising). Plus, it co-sponsors E!Online (the entertainment channel). Don't miss this. –BG

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

music

ABBAnatic
http://www.dlc.com/funnyguy/abba.html
What's an ABBAnatic? A mental patient who slaves away on a Web page about Scandanavia's finest pop quartet. Featuring primo graphics, lyrics to all of ABBA's songs, track listings, and cover art to all the albums (including a bunch of bootleg recordings), this site is overwhelmingly comprehensive. Catch up with post-ABBA solo projects, including the Broadway flop CHESS, which spawned the early 80s smash, "One Night In Bangkok." Even if you hate ABBA and all things Swedish, the site's worth visiting for the album art alone. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Be Happy Or Die
http://www.emba.uvm.edu/~jross/aonhome.html
Be Happy or Die is dedicated to the 80s techno-pop band, Art of Noise, which is no longer with us. How sad. The discography features album cover art and track listings to most of their stuff. The Text section separately features the liner notes to all the albums. The Images area is simply a standard directory listing of all the images on the site. Not very helpful. Maybe a class on the Art of Web Design would be more in order. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Beyond Infinite Connections
http://www.eelab.newpaltz.edu/~harple31/pm.dawn/index.html
The Infinite Connection celebrates the magical music of pop stars PM Dawn... and Beyond! The Web site includes a text-heavy discography, lyrics, and liner notes to some of the songs, a few pictures, and some information on how to get in contact with the record company. The one unique resource on this page is a set of links to various music charts, like *Billboard*'s Top 40 and the Gavin Report, which track PM Dawn's success (or lack thereof). Also check out the site's news bulletin center to follow the latest news on their DJ, who was arrested for having sex with his 14-year-old cousin. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Bird on a Wire: The Leonard Cohen Home Page
http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/cpage/Leonard_Cohen/
The Leonard Cohen Home Page looks terrific with Netscape. Like Mr. Cohen, it's got professional class in a morass of tired-looking nobodies hurriedly cobbled together. The discography and lyrics are listed by album, complete with scans of the original record's art. There are a few

No beautiful loser, Leonard Cohen rocks on the net.

articles and interviews to be perused and pointers to choose Lenny-related resources. If you're a fan, it's an indispensable resource, and if you're not, the crooning shots may be worth the visit alone. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Gordon Lightfoot
http://www.mmlc.nwu.edu/~mfifer/lightfoot/index.html
Hotfoot it over to the Gordon Lightfoot page, where you can get a fanciful band biography, up-to-date tour information, a decent discography, guitar tab, and links-a-plenty to outside Gordon-sites. The "band" area contains separate pages for each band member detailing their vital stats and outside interests and hobbies. A sort of Rock & Roll resume. The You and the Gord area is filled with user-submitted pictures of Gordy and themselves throughout the ages. And age they have. While not the prettiest or most comprehensive fan resource, it functions and has funny pictures to boot. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Labyrinth Oz Music Site
http://jeack.apana.org.au/~rexx/
Personally, I think we have enough unsigned bands in this country, but If you're into local bands from Sydney and Melbourne, you'll like this site. There are links to information on independent bands including any e-mail addresses or Web pages they might have. The best link they feature is the Rick James Prison Web site, which has been keeping him busy. Unfortunately, all this information comes with a price: being so far away, it's incredibly slow. Save time, turn the graphics off, and read about the band Silverthrone, a Silverchair knock-off;.. only these guys are 15! *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

NoMeansNo
http://www.musicwest.com/wrong/nomeansno/
NoMeansNo claims to have toured the world over since 1981, selling out stadiums and everything, but so does David Haselhoff. There are the usual lyrics, list of tour dates, and a nice set of publicity stills to prop up this otherwise anemic site. I'm not familiar with this band's music and might have liked some sound files or some other content to give me a sense of what they do. I guess if you're a fan (and I'm sure you are) you'd like this O.K. I Just Say No. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Street Justice
http://www.oslonett.no/~gatasp/gpe.html
Gatas Parliament is the Norwegian Communist rap group that makes up 67 percent of the funk in that country, and 100 percent of this Web site. Even though the bulk of it is in indecipherable

Vocalist Elling of "rap against the rich" Gatas Parliament also belongs to Red Youth.

Norwegian, there's enough English to let you understand what's going on. Read (what you can) of their bios. Don't they look cute? Sure, these young Red Shirts may want to overthrow their parents capitalist agenda, but that doesn't stop them from Rockin'! *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Byrds
http://www.uark.edu/~kadler/rmcguinn/
Psychedelic, man! Even though I was through with the 60s in the late 80s, this brought me back. A trippy logo dominates this site, featuring tons of band photos and album artwork, a few sound files, a giant unformatted Usenet FAQ, guitar tab, and the latest news from the band mem-

Psychedelic art takes you back to the 60s at The Byrds.

bers themselves. Also, peruse "fan memories" of the great times and the concerts they were too drugged out to remember. Visit the "Folk Den," which has a new, unreleased folk song every month available for the download. Maybe these Byrds can sing, but William Shatner still does a better Tambourine Man. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Grammy Awards
http://www.grammy.com/
By the time you read this, the Grammy Awards will be a glint in the eye of a fickle public. A visit to the Grammy page will yield a big list of who's been nominated in every category, from Rock to Classical. There's also a mysterious link to a Rock Artist Showcase, which never works. A few days from when I am writing this, the site promises to have daily updates and live feeds leading up to the awards. Of course, by the time you read this, it'll all be moot. My bold prediction for 1996: The Monkees sweep this year's awards... again! *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

pastimes

AeroCrafter Homebuilt Aircraft Sourcebook
http://www.hooked.net/baicorp/aerocrafter/
Getting tired of billboards on the Web? Me, too. Especially when they are as mundane as this one. If you happen to own a copy of *The Aircraft Sourcebook*, you will definitely want to check out the table of corrections to the text found at this site. Short of that, this page only tries to convince you to buy a copy of your field guide to the exciting world of airplane construction. If you do feel the urge to buy the book, I suggest you check out a copy in your local bookstore; you won't find much information about it here. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **D-**

Longriders Biker Mall
http://www.longriders.com/
Visit the Biker Mall for motorcycle photos, support... and a whole lotta trouble. We're talking browser trouble. Netscape 2.0's Frames feature may be a few thousand BPSes ahead of its time – it's nice to have all those independent windows on a single screen, but if the content chokes your bandwidth, the gimmick isn't worth the download struggle. Even on a T1 line,

Motorcycle-related screensavers and more are found here.

the site hobbled in like Tim Conway's old man character from "The Carol Burnett Show." An audio file of a roaring Harley sounded like white noise, and "slides shows" of various motorcycles and bikini babes failed to slide as promised. *–JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Paper Airplane of the Month
http://pchelp.inc.net/paper_ac.htm

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

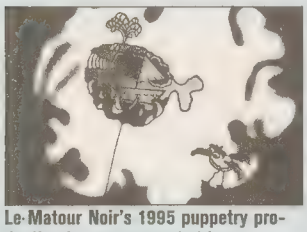
Long after the last Cootie Catcher of your grade school years has been recycled, paper airplanes are still guaranteed to amaze. Especially if you live on the third story. This cute site offers a new plane template every month to print, fold, and let fly. But given the infinite possibilities of a sheet of paper (and maybe a paperclip or two), the maintainers of this page could certainly do better than monthly updates. You can always take the matter into your own hands though – hacking your own dead-tree dirigible is always more fun than recreating that same old flying wing. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Puppetry

http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~rosesage/puppetry/puppetry.html

Puppetry is one of the worlds most venerable art forms, yet it is usually not considered "serious" in this country – an impression this site goes to great lengths to change. Whether you are a serious puppeteer, or totally new to the art, there is an extensive amount of well-organized information to capture your interest. The site is arranged by types of puppetry, and includes famous puppets and puppeteers, current puppet exhibits and touring companies, online resources, mail order supply houses, and much more! *–BB*



Le Matour Noir's 1995 puppetry production is commemorated here.

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Square Dancing

http://pages.map.com/~bobl/sdance.htm

Swing your partner dosee doe... With lists of square dance dealers, organizations, callers, cuers, clubs, and other related Web sites, Square Dancing is certain to teach you at least something about the world of square dancing. Even though the site is still under construction, there's good information to be found, no matter what part of the country you're in. Or the world for that matter – there's a link to the Belgium Square Dancing Organization. Who knew? *–RK*

net rating: *overall:* ***C***

Thee Joker's Funhouse

http://www.escape.com/~joker/

First of all, hacking was not just an 80s teen fetish that ended when the Legion of Doom went to jail and Shimomura nailed Mitnick. It's alive and well in many basements and high school computer labs, which still follow the maxim that "information wants to be free." This site is a basic

Lots of links to hacker and phreaker sites are here.

guide to phone phreaking and hacking resources on the Web. Although a bit young, and riddled with an annoying amount of slang, Thee Joker's Funhouse is a fine starting point if you want an introduction to the questionable activities of those lurking on the lines. Remember, though: If the phone company calls, deny owning one. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Unofficial Martha Stewart Home Page

http://tear.cybercash.com/kerry/martha.html

Upon first click, this page seems like an exercise in irony... But laugh not. We're talking true Martha Stewart fandom here. In fact, the phrase "goddess of the home" can be found in the opening paragraph. By exploring this site, you too can learn the secrets of being Martha – icon for the hyperreal American home of beautiful flowers and tidy living rooms! Start with the Martha Mega-FAQ, indulge yourself with a few "Ask Martha" columns posted here, and then grab your wire whisk and follow a link to the coveted oatmeal cranberry cookie recipe. Yum! *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* ***A-***

Virtual Garden

http://pathfinder.com/@@EucPNeG6gAAAQISI/vg/

Let's face it: You either have a green thumb, or you prefer plastic plants. I'm the latter kind of person. But still, the Virtual Garden offers a wealth of information I wish I could put to use. The searchable plants encyclopedia is really amaz-

Learn more about the New York Botanical Garden here.

ing – learn to identify the three forms of lettuce and discover if the Adiantum plant really has the power to thicken and curl hair. For the more diehard dirt dweller, the site has numerous online gardening books and magazines to peruse and even a directory of the finest botanical gardens in the world. Couldn't find any Cannabis Sativa growing tips on the site, though. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* ***A-***

TakeDown

http://www.takedown.com/

SITE OF THE MONTH net MAY 1996

When renowned computer hacker Kevin Mitnick was arrested in a Raleigh, NC apartment early last year, the event marked not the daring capture of a sociopath, but the easy picking of a frustrated Unix nerd who was begging to be caught. Mitnick, a "career hacker" if you will, had allowed a potentially harmless pastime to grow into a debilitating obsession. His hacks had become cries for help, the electronic pleas of a loner, an underachiever, the product of a broken home. His capture by the FBI was thus a humanitarian gesture. Marlon Perkins couldn't have tranquilized a wounded animal with more noble intentions.

This is the Mitnick melodrama as presented by Tsutomu Shimomura, a senior fellow at the San Diego Supercomputer Center. Shimomura helped authorities track Mitnick after the hacker invaded and ransacked Shimomura's computers in December 1994. Mitnick was snagged some two month later, implicated in a variety of computer break-ins, and charged with "illegal use of a telephone access device." The entire story can be found on TakeDown, a site that details Shimomura's role in the man hunt, and delves into Mitnick's personal history and psychology.

The site brims with fascinating minutiae, including replays of some of Mitnick's key Telnet sessions. Sure, you could read the print version, co-authored by Shimomura and New York Times reporter John Markoff. And, yes, you can visit the book's official Hyperion promo site. But Shimomura's own TakeDown site provides RealAudio samples of John Woo-like phone messages left on his personal answering machine during the height of Mitnick's mischief. Were the messages from Mitnick himself? This has yet to be determined. They are, however, patently bizarre:

"Damn you. My technique is the best. My boss is the best. Damn you, I know rdist technique, I know sendmail technique, and my style is much better. Damn you, don't you know who I am? Me and my friends, we'll kill you."

While the voice may not be Mitnick's, the crank call does reflect the playful hacking spirit shared by Mitnick and his brethren. In other words, hacking isn't about stealing money or intellectual property. It's about demonstrating one's own power in a faceless, postmodern society. While Shimomura arrogantly paints himself as a white knight to Mitnick's ugly Quasimodo, he does sketch an accurate and compelling picture of hacking as a pastime-cum-obsession. –JP

net rating: *overall:* ***A***

politics

Brian's Progressive Pages
http://paul.spu.edu/~sinnfein/progressive.html

A site for left-barking watchdogs. This page offers articles and links on "patriots," militias, and the all-around Far Right. There are a good number of links to other sites, and a good sampling of reports from respectable sources. While the site could use more links on a broader range of issues, those wishing to monitor the right side of the Web may find it an interesting starting point. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Democratic National Committee
http://www.democrats.org/

This Web organ of the Democratic Party is pretty good, covering a lot of different

Get the latest on the budget battles, or link to Al Gore's cartoon gallery.

areas of Democratic activity. Democratic political victories, which have become rather rare events, are featured on the home page. Areas of content include Organizations, What's New, and Contact Info for all Democratic legislators. Hot topics, such as this year's budget battle, are covered with an obviously pro-Demo slant, and a form is provided to join online (all major credit cards accepted). *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Feminist Majority Foundation
http://www.feminist.org/

While this may not be the best non-profit women's site (it proudly displays this award from Impact Online), it is the best feminist resource site I've found. News, urgent action alerts, links to university resources, online zines, and additional feminist Web sites are well-presented in a snazzy HTML package – with forms, tables, image maps, etc. The 911 section is outstanding, with links to domestic violence and sexual harassment resources. It's regularly updated and should be a very important item on any feminist's bookmark list. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Gay and Lesbian Utah Democrats
http://members.aol.com/glud/

This is a nice example of how to disseminate information about a political organization. Not only does GLUD (Gay and Lesbian Utah Democrats) provide ample info about the group, with contact information and instructions on how to join, it also has some original content. GLUD has plenty of news clippings, updates about hot issues, and an action alert section to keep activists busy and informed. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

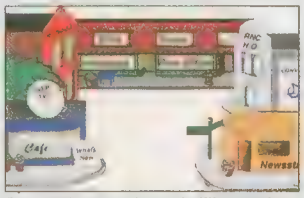
New World Media Digital Alternative Media
http://www.worldmedia.com/

The work of Noam Chomsky, dissident, semanticist, media analyst, and all-around smart guy, is the basis for this page. Abundant on the site are theories about using digital tools to generate and spread content while circumventing the big boy media playground. Also worth your time is an interactive version of Chomsky's classic *Manufacturing Consent* and a quick scan of the comprehensive Chomsky archives. The anarchists behind this digital curtain are ready to undermine mainstream agendas using their enemy's own methods of media manipulation. As William Gibson wrote in *Neuromancer*, "the street finds its own use for things." *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Republican Main Street
http://www.rnc.org/

While most of us are completely bored with the main street/town hall/cyber community metaphor found on far too many Web sites, Republican Main Street pulls it off quite gracefully – it's graphically strong and never overbearing. It's a site for all things Republican: video clips of Republicans on TV, regular updates on the Republican National Convention, bulletin boards, guest-



The "main street/town hall" metaphor is carried out well here.

books, and live chats for starters. Especially interesting is the School section, which illustrates the history of the party and how to run for office. Well done. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Secret History of the United States: 1962 1995
http://ucunix.san.uc.edu/~taylorrm/

Any site promising to reveal secrets is A-O.K by me! And secrets about U.S. history are even more entertaining, as the small details that link assassins to Hollywood to dead presidents and UFOs have always been especially fascinating. While this site may not boast an extraordinary repertoire of HTML bells and whistles (no color, no tricks, and few stylie graphics), it's phat with interesting text and links. Search the site by major topics – Nuclear, UFOs, Drugs, National Debt, and civil rights – or

Learn about the "terrible history of U.S. intervention" here.

click on a year. The site creator also built the conspiracy pages at **http://www.uc.edu/~taylorrm**; go figure. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Skeleton Closet
http://www.realchange.org/

The dirt is what drives us. In this closet is a beautiful summary of the allegations and confirmed scandals surrounding our glorious leaders and those who want to be. Get insight into Bob Dole's short fuse, Clinton's Whitewater past, and Newt's rubber checks. With plenty of information and, most importantly, a comprehensive list of sources for the tidbits, the Skeleton Closet is where I'll be hanging my hat during the fall of 1996, when things really start to get interesting. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Alternative Group
http://www.mindspring.com/~tag/

O.K. – listen up... Gen-Xers don't just spend their time eating Oreos and watching Brady Bunch reruns! Some of us *are* political and ready to grab Washington by its ties to make a difference. TAG promises to become a non-partisan filter and clearinghouse supporting practical public policy and discourse between the young people who will feel the effects of today's government, tomorrow. Most of this new

A non-partisan advocacy group for Gen-Xers debating issues that will affect today's youth? Only on the Web.

site is still under construction, but TAG hopefully will become a powerful political launching point offering news analysis, links to relevant sites, and suggestions for action. Choose or lose, baby. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Political NewsTalk Network
http://net.fcref.org/

An online presence for a cable TV network, this site archives excerpts from interviews and rants that occur on the network's shows. Not exactly original content, but interesting. The site claims to be anti-establishment, and implies that it is just as critical of Republicans as it is of Democrats. A little closer reading of the material on the site, though, reveals a definite conservative bias, with essays equating the Dred Scott decision, which affirmed slavery in the nineteenth century, with Roe *vs.* Wade. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Voyager Guerrilla Girls
http://www.voyagerco.com/gg/gg.html

For almost a decade, the Guerrilla Girls have been wheat-pasting healthy doses of post-feminist modernist agit-prop onto buildings, poles, and the minds of the world. Using their trademark creative approach of targeting sexism, physical abuse, and any "boys club" that emerges with irony and DTP, the Guerrilla Girls have risen to the New Media occasion with this Web site. The site is a clean, elegant archive of their posters – political art that also serves as a catalog of this decade's fight for women's equality. As their slogan

These artists dub themselves the conscience of the art world.

states, the Guerrilla Girls "could be anyone. We are everywhere." Be ready. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

professional

Annals of Saudi Medicine
http://www.kfshrc.edu.sa/annals/annals.html

The Annals of Saudi Medicine is a good resource for health care professionals interested in geographically focused medical studies. Original articles, case reports, letters to the editor, editorials, and review articles deal with all aspects of clinical, academic, and investigative medicine and research. Papers are written in English, and include studies with appropriately obscure subject-matter, like the one detailing a 10-year retrospective review of patients with scorpion stings at the Emergency Department of the King Fahad National Guard Hospital in Riyadh. *–LG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

CSUWEB: RTFM Web Style
http://csugrad.cs.vt.edu/manuals/

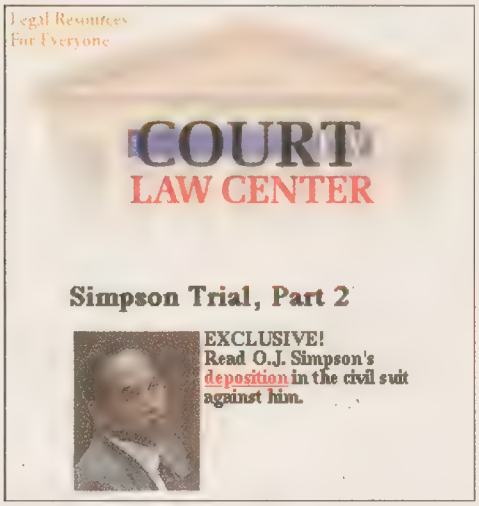
I didn't want to go in there. The glare from the gray standard browser background would burn my eyes, my throat would be parched from the dryness of the content, and, not knowing the terrain, I would be lost. Send me to the new Disney site, I cried. But the story was in

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

Court TV Home Page

http://www.courttv.com/index.html

You can't be serious. A television-related site chosen as Professional Site of the Month? We Internet-users are far superior to television watchers, right? We can't denigrate the interactive – and information-packed – Internet by judging it on the basis of a television product that happens to have a Web site. Television is the opiate of the masses! The Internet will save the world! (And we all know that the Internet was really invented by dolphins using extraterrestrial technology.)



Still, Court TV's Internet entrant, the Court TV Law Center, is not only a good source of law information, it also manages to redeem television as much as that is possible. The site's basic utilities are a search engine and a glossary of legal terms. The glossary isn't comprehensive, but it does cover enough ground to clarify any of the cases presented here. The search engine is a good shortcut for finding a particular case without going through any indexes.

The home page, like any good table of contents, organizes the site by departments and features. When I was there, O.J.'s face adorned the feature section, with a hyperlink to his deposition in the civil suit brought against him by the Goldmans. Can we ever escape O.J.? Also featured was a special area on the Telecom bill that had been recently passed; it contained many articles about various aspects of the legislation and what it would mean to Internet users. The 20-plus articles here provided more depth and clarification than you could get from reading the actual text of the bill.

The departments include case files, a library, games, a kids section, and a store. Of course, Court TV's idea of games isn't the typical puzzle or maze that a lot of other sites offer. It has various historical cases in which you are invited to identify the facts, make arguments, and decide the case. This is the kind of stuff that law students live for. The library section isn't Harvard Law – you couldn't use it as a substitute for Lexis – but it does have articles and files on cases that would be of interest to casual users. Under the Newsmakers reference, you can find out the legal gossip on your favorite stars. Call it pop law, but it's great for helping you really understand the big cases in the papers, and you'll appear really smart at cocktail parties as you offer your informed commentary. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology fuels this site.

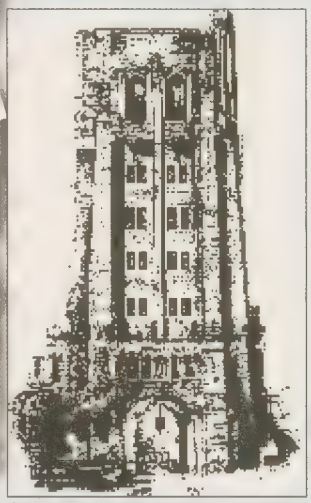
will be thoroughly mystified by the boldly obscure nomenclature at this site, which only proves its worth to the bona fide bio chemist. If, for instance, you're into carbohydrates, lipids, and other natural products, you can peruse full articles or abstracts on topics like "investigation of the calcium-mediated association between the carbohydrate head groups of galactosylceramide and galactosylceramide...." And, as even the most brilliant science maven might sometimes have trouble navigating the Web, a convenient online handbook helps you waltz through everything at the site, from keyword searches to downloading related charts. *–LG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Legal Information Institute

http://www.law.cornell.edu/lii.table.html

Another information dump on the overused superhighway metaphor, this one contains articles on legal topics and the entire U.S. Code in HTML format. This



Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute is packed with legalese.

digital communication age's wealth of information amazes, but the poor organization of these pages makes the amount of content here simply overwhelming. One of the first paragraphs on the home page has some of the major resources linked within the text, such as the index of recent Supreme Court decisions, but these links aren't in the index at the bottom of the page, which looks like a table of contents for the site. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

PawSafe

http://www2.pcix.com/users/pawsafe/public_html/

there, and I had to get it. Software manuals, a whole library of online software manuals. But these aren't your latest Microsoft products, these are the hardcore, the pure stuff: GNU programs for Unix. I feel faint. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Dealmakers

http://www.property.com/

Somewhere in the grayed-out fringes of corporate America is a realm called commercial real estate. Those Taco Bells and Marshall's don't just come with prefabricated buildings, you know; an agent has to find store space to colonize. And if that agent is smart, he or she probably already subscribes to the print version of Dealmakers. Like the latter, the online ver-

Glean insight and info on all aspects of real estate here.

sion is a massive compendium of available commercial space; plus, it has an amazing list of links to real estate-related sites on the Web. While an attempt has been made at graphics, I found them ugly, and all these listings could use a little computerized database wizardry. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Internet Law Library

http://www.pls.com:8001/

I'm pretty certain that this site could not possibly be made any duller or blander in appearance than it already is. We're talking the most basic of basic Netscape gray and hyperlink a la blue, which may be fine for a law library... You'll find 11 copies of the U.S. constitution (one in Spanish), every other country on the planet's constitution, attorney and legal directory links, reviews of law books, and a few measly icons (mostly U.S. flag variations). It's great as a stockpile of information for lawyers and legal wannabes, which is what it's meant to be. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Journal of Biological Chemistry

http://www-jbc.stanford.edu/jbc/

Casual passers-by and armchair scientists

Want to adopt one of these cute kitties via the Web? Check here.

"Making a difference, one pet at a time." Hmmm. Hope my pet is first in line! Actually, though, this site is about pets needing to be rescued – dogs and cats to adopt (with pictures as a super bonus). PawSafe also lists ways you can help – a wish list and volunteer opportunities. Check out the organization's mission, or trot over to the store for pet purchases. Woof. The layout is O.K., with some nifty Table construction, but overall, it's pretty dry. *–BG*.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

PCL Map Collection

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/Map_collection.html

Map devotees know that the charting of any terra incognitae is much more than simple diagramming: It's art. The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection Online is an incredible resource for those seeking practical guidance (like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, flood maps) to the aesthetically inspiring (the early twentieth century city map of Antakya in the Levant). With more than 230,000 maps covering every area of the world – including some 9,000 city street maps, as well as current road maps for each U.S. state and Canadian province – this site's URL is sure to remain at the top of just about everybody's bookmark list. *–LG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

reference

A Basic ASL Aid

http://home.earthlink.net/~masterstek/ASLDict.html

To speak without words is just what the Basic American Sign Language site hopes to teach people on the Web. Learn basic hand gestures for words such as Alaska, green, and toilet. The site also shows all the signs for the alphabet and numbers up to 10. Even though this site is an excellent resource, it *is* basic in design. Glitches in the site will take visitors to the bottom of the page when all they wanted was to look up the sign for ambulance. Perhaps mastering the sign for the word annoying would be more useful here. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

BABEL: A Glossary of Computer-Related Abbreviations and Acronyms

http://www.access.digex.net/~ikind/babel96a.html

Impress friends and family by babbling with BABEL. This site is a glossary of computer-oriented abbreviations and acronyms that comes in handy when arguing with other geeky kids. Someone who has an ACE up his sleeve is either playing cards, or has a big enough shirt to store an Advanced Computing Environment. Having a BLAST doesn't mean someone's having fun, but instead, receiving a Blocked Asynchronous Transmission. Print out the list and make an acronym trivia game for your next party. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Blender Web Popspeak Slang Dictionary

http://www.blender.com/blender1.1/digest/popspeak/popspeak2.html

Is her scarf too ABBA? Do you have a Barbie-Dream Boyfriend? Is the temp worker a bit more Nutrasweet than you expected? Visit the Blender Web Popspeak Slang Dictionary for a crash course in slang and hipster lingo. Each letter in the alphabet has a slang term, definition, corresponding graphic, an example of the word used in conversation, and even a audio file to hear proper pronunciation. Many of the terms derive from television shows ("He's such an Urkel!"), movies, and music. Update your vocab or you could be considered to be a regular John-Boy. *–BJB*

Click on any letter on the Blender home page to get to slang terms.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Telephone Directories On the Web

http://homepages.enterprise.net/rh/tel/

Reach out and touch someone online. Telephone Directories On the Web is a bookmark list of links to online telephone, fax, and business directories from around the world. Every link, from the Australia Yellow Pages to U.K. phone information, is on this site. Look up a lost friend in Slovenia, or call a pizza delivery place in Italy. Not much on the graphics side, the site can be a bit boring to visit unless you happen to be a fanatical phone phreak. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

religion

Alpha Net

http://www.azstarnet.com/~fbarnes/alphanet.htm

Surely everyone will agree that the King James Bible can be a confusing hodge-podge at times. It is obvious that editors were in short supply when the Scripture was initially being put to paper; how else can one explain the organization and presentation of the Good Book? Thankfully, the good people at Alpha Net have provided a solution. The essential Biblical tales – Adam and Eve, Noah, and such – are presented in a concise and easily digested format, with verse annotations for those who care. Related links can carry the interested to a range of Bible sites. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Atheist Express

http://www.hti.net/www/atheism/

Visitors to this page find news of religion-related court cases, calendars of upcoming atheist conventions, related links, and so on – exactly the kind of information one would expect from an atheist site. But something is missing: Am I wrong to expect more joy in all of this? After all, one would think an atheist page might convey more glee found in announcing, "Hey! We're alone down here!" *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Church of the Bunny Bunican West

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/vpd/

I've long argued that harsh words and scorn are not the way to confront the dangerous and kooky. Ridicule and sarcasm are far more effective. Take note: The Church of the Bunny offers as plausible an explanation of this world and its workings as any religion I've ever encountered. Loads of information on church doctrine and members make this one of the most amusing religious-themed sites on the Web. *–SS*

Check out the Hysterical Archives at this site to learn more about the Bunny god.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Jewish Communications Network

http://www.jcn18.com/

The Jewish Communications Network (JCN) offers a comprehensive guide to all things Jewish. It starts with a nice layout (recently updated), smooth organization, and spiffy graphics, then unfolds into a breadth of diverse, useful content. The site features current events (learn about the latest developments in Israel), scoops the dirt on political candidates (like Pat Buchanan), provides a calender of events, and has loads of links, links, links. For complete coverage and regular updates, it's tops. *–BG*

JCNavigate takes you to loads of Jewish-related sites on the Web.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Lift Up Your Hearts

http://www.golden.net/worship/

Seeking a little guidance on your Lutheran path? Lift Up Your Hearts is a nice resource to check out. It offers information about the Lutheran Evangelical church, links to resources, and interesting essays on prayers and living the Lutheran life. It's not exactly a dazzler of a site, but it performs the task well enough, and has a few techno-gadgets like Tables. *–BG*

Gain access to practical resources designed to enhance the worship and spiritual life of the Lutheran community at the Lift Up Your Hearts site.

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Ogmios

http://www.ogmios.com/

Ogmios is an organization dedicated to opposing the coming reign of the Antichrist. Ogmios also refers to the European who will lead this opposition. The Ogmios organization is recruiting individuals of all backgrounds to join the struggle: astrologists, numerologists, writers, scientists, and others. Each has a role to play as the End-Times draw near. Related links provide information on Nostradamus, channeling, ufology, and "the photon belt phenomenon increasingly referred to in the channeled literature." As the twentieth century draws to a close, it is reassuring to know that the fourteenth century is still very much with us. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Towers of Avalon

http://www.neca.com/~ice/avalon/

This site is a collection of links related to

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

Roots & Culture

http://www.escape.com/~rastaman/Roots.html

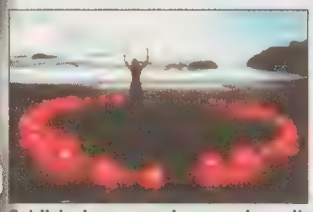
When I was attending U.C. Santa Cruz, Rastafarianism was extremely popular among the student body.

Many students grew make-shift dreadlocks, donned green, yellow, and red knit hats, and walked around saying things like, "Jah love, dude." The silliness ended after graduation. The pressing need to earn a living drove Rasta pretenders into the working world.

The subculture lives on, in a sense, in the pages of Roots and Culture. While you'll find links to reggae sites, there aren't any references to Bob Marley and his musical progeny. Instead, the site's emphasis is on Ethiopian religion and history. Within the context of Roots doctrine, the term Ethiopian denotes all people of African origin – Africans, African Americans, and, in fact, all the world's people who, according to scientific evidence, descended from a common African ancestor.

Despite this broad inclusion of the globe's entire populace, much of the site's content focuses on the country of Ethiopia itself, and the religious teaching of Emperor Haile Selassie I. You'll find a quiz about Selassie I that is clearly intended to teach instead of test – if you quickly want an answer to one of the questions, you can activate a nifty drop-down device for immediate results. Selassie I is portrayed as a visionary who unified Ethiopians worldwide. Another section is devoted to Marcus Garvey, a seminal figure in the American Black Renaissance of the 20s and 30s, and the leader of the Back to Africa movement. Throughout the site, you'll find references to God and the Bible presented in such a way that suggests religion cannot be separated from the political realm. To educate people in Ethiopian religious practices, the site includes a page with information on Masqal Baal, the Commemoration Day of the True Cross, held across Ethiopia on Sept. 17. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**



Get links to pagan, wiccan, and occult links on the Web.

the usual suspects: pagans, wiccans, shamans, and witches. It is as broad as any I have found on these matters, and should be of use to anyone who cares about such things. I find it interesting how quickly fringe religions – and fringe types in general – latched on to the Internet and WWW. For all the crap out there in cyberspace, it is still the most efficient means by which people can contact each other and add their voice to the noisy din of modern life. *–SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

science

Dr. Bob's Home Page

http://ny.frontiercomm.net/~bjenkin/science.htm

Doctor Bob is a smart one. He'll tell you about the sun, in simple basic terms. He'll tell you about the space shuttle, break down the mysteries of "that amazing ice," and brief you on the facts about tsunamis (giant tidal waves). This is an extremely useful and entertaining Web site for science fans; I just wish he'd learn that dark, heavily patterned backgrounds make it difficult to read thin and light text. Even more frustrating because the oft-unreadable text is actually very interesting. *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Earth and Universe

http://www.eia.brad.ac.uk/btl/

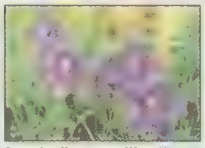
For the astronomy aficionado or hobbyist, the Internet is a great place. There are thousands of NASA pages, and you don't have to be outside in the middle of the night getting eyestrain peering through a telescope. Earth and Universe adds a lot of astronomical visual content to the Web, with pictures of stars in various stages of formation, plus many other cosmic formations. There is also a Telescope Documentation Index with all sorts of articles on telescope systems. Unfortunately, the whole thing is slow as a rock, and the organization needs work. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Flora of China

http://foc.harvard.edu:2048/

It starts with a splash of color (though a bit slow). Clicking a little deeper will reveal somewhat cheesy icons and standard layout techniques, though admittedly, it's done well. Therein lies mucho content on flowers that grow in China. Pictures, illustrations, and maps lace the pages nicely – all with size labels so you know how big an image is going to be *before* you click. The site also boasts a hefty search engine, and as if that ain't enough, it provides links to other flora search engines at affiliated institutions. Overall, it's a botanist's dream. *–BG*



Lovely flowers, like these from the A'nyemaqen Shan region of Qinghai Province, dot the site.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Museum of Science and Industry Chicago

http://www.msichicago.org/

This museum has some really cool things in it, the kind that you don't expect to see in a museum. There's a German U-Boat and a Boeing 727 that you can walk around in. I believe in the 727, because I saw pictures of it, but the U-Boat will have to remain unconfirmed. My point is that the Web site has a very small slice of the more than 2,000 exhibits housed in the physical museum. What is shown on the site makes it pretty enticing for visitors to come and see the physical museum, which may be the master plan, but with all the material it possesses, the museum could be a great contributor to the richness of Web content. *–WKC*

Flight fans can learn about the flight of a United Airlines Boeing 727.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Virtual Chaos: A Theory of Everything

http://www.virtualchaos.org/

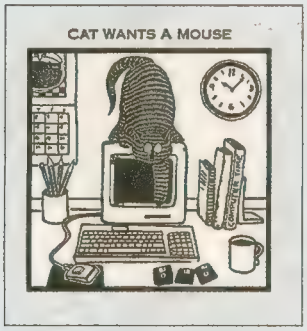
More "X-Files" than science, this site on virtual chaos theory was created by people who wish to remain anonymous. They propose that the simple statement "1+2=3" permeates all phenomena, and from this, have concluded that time begins in the middle and heads toward the beginning and the end simultaneously, the former being a red shift, and the latter being a blue shift. Maybe I'm stupid, maybe the Web isn't the right medium to promote such far-flung theory, but reading this hasn't changed my life significantly. Can you solve this puzzle? *–WKC*

I am the doughnut god. Worship me and I will sprinkle you.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

shopping

A Tale of Two Kitties
http://www.twokitties.com/
If you like to display or even flaunt your love of cats, and you can tolerate intense cuteness, A Tale of Two Kitties could be for you. It's a well-organized, easy-to-view catalog of stuff for feline fans – tote bags, T-shirts, caps, and, of course, computer accessories (you need a cat mouse pad, don't you?). Though the site is heavy on



Cat Wants a Mouse is the title of this Philip Dingman T-shirt, available here.

the pastels and cutesy copy, the products are clearly described and priced, and ordering is easy (fax, e-mail, mail, and phone). Not only can you outfit your entire house and body in cat-related goods, you can even purchase a couple of products for your own tabby. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

EMusic
http://www.emusic.com/
Here's a music site that offers some reasonably smart searching (by song, title, year, artist, genre, label) for a 100,000-item catalog. There are some nice features, including links to new titles and concert dates (under construction at this writing), top-40 charts, top-sellers by year, and a way to review both your current and previous orders. This is a good stop for music lovers, though some of its links still must be smoothed out, and it needs a more readable storehouse of titles. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Long Grove Confectionery Company
http://www.longgrove.com/
Forget Mom's birthday? Want to send that special someone from the chat room a chocolate computer? Never fear, Long Grove is ready to meet your needs 24 hours a day. With a wide and quirky variety of mouthwatering chocolates to choose from, it should provide the perfect gift that will bring a smile to any chocoholic's face. From the site, you can order all the delicacies from a form, have them gift-wrapped and delivered, and get a free box of chocolates for yourself. Despite all this, since the only payment option Long Grove gives you is plastic, and its forms are insecure, I probably won't be ordering any luscious chocolate tackle boxes. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

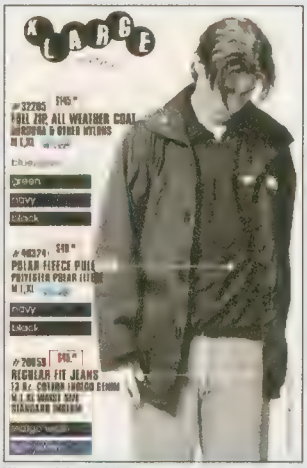
Sound Spectrum
http://www.soundspectrum.com/
If you don't need instant gratification, music is an easy shopping goal on the net. You can often search your chosen site by title or artist, sometimes by genre, and order up a storm. Sound Spectrum claims 120,000 titles (30,000 of them are classical), orders filled within 24 hours, online or fax ordering options, and the delivery of U.S. orders to you within three to seven days. These are good things. What's not so good is the less-than-smart search mechanism that doesn't tell you it needs last-name-first to deliver the titles you seek, and the plain-text database that doesn't provide release dates, labels, or genre clues. It's O.K., but it could be better. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

The Great Fax Cover Sheet Co.
http://www.iwsc.com/greatfax/index.html
Hankering for a remote control holder? How about fax cover sheet cartoons or funny fax post-its for your outgoing communiques? Or can we interest you in a pair of rolling scissors for ease of cutting? If you want any of these things, stop on by and order them here. You can e-mail your order, call the office, or send your request to a Bulletin Board System. (Naturally, you can also fax.) The items are adequately described, but this would be a more useful site if it offered a great number of products. *–KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

X-Large Inte(r)network
http://www.cinenet.net/xlarge/



Hip and bored-looking youth dot the clothing catalog portion of this site.

For today's young suburban fashion plate, X-large brings its entire clothing catalog to the Web. Unfortunately, it just scanned in the catalog, which is viewable one bandwidth-eating page at a time. The site is much more than a catalog, though. It develops an image of the company as a propagator of irreverent, angst-ridden, youth culture. From video game manuals to an essay praising the merits of liquor, X-Large runs down what's hip in sound bite-sized chunks. It has a small archive of sounds and video, and a very active open forum that is mostly a discussion of hip hop. The site is very cool. Definitely worth a visit even if you are not interested in the catalog. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

sports

CyberDojo
http://www.ryu.com/CyberDojo/
The CyberDojo site represents a group of karate lovers interested in discussing Traditional Japanese or Okinawan Karate. The site features plenty of karate information, including a FAQ, the CyberDojo mailing list, a directory sorted by styles, a Karate terminology list, a traditional Karate Kata list, a schedule of Karate-related events, a Karate bibliography and suggested readings list, and cute little Karate guy icons. Learn that there's more to Karate than chopping wood with your feet! *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Fastball
http://www.fastball.com/
I have a vision of Fantasy Baseball addicts, spittle dripping from their mouths, pouring over the intense baseball minutiae on this site. Run by Cox Newspapers, this site has access to tons of content – professional reports, pictures, videos, and RealAudio reports. It's got the latest baseball news fresh off the wire and organized by team, plus the latest team transactions, discussion areas, batter-by-batter stats, scores, schedules, photos, Official Rules, and even quotes by baseball's least funny

Everything a baseball lover could want, and more, is at Fastball.

spokesperson, Bob Ueker. The only limitation of this stat-loaded wonderland is its Atlanta Braves bias. Good thing they won last year. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Fat Tire Wire
http://www.Fat-Tire-Wire.com/ftw/
Dedicated to the sport of mountain biking, Fat Tire Wire would be a great place if its most interesting features weren't "Under Construction." The Bike Swap free classified section would be cool if it worked. The Discussion area didn't work either. The racing database, designed to match you to a race, was incomplete. However, there *was* a complete list of races by region and a working list of links to some bike companies, but besides some photos and stuff, that's it. Hope they get more stuff up there soon. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Frisbee Freestyle
http://www.users.interport.net/~rmeier/disc/disc.html
Anyone can catch a frisbee, but not everyone can spin a plastic disk with style. See photos of pros such as Bob Coleman catching a frisbee with his leg draped over his arm, or witness the grace of Gena Sample's leg split as she catches a low throw. Look up the rankings of the top frisbee players in the Freestyle Players Association section or follow your favorite players in the tournament schedule. Test

Gary Lynus' innovative drawing captures the spirit of grace and fun that marks this frisbee lovers' site.

your disk knowledge in the Frisbee Trivia section or let the links list take you to related sites as if you were a frisbee floating across the Web. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Golf Magazine
http://www.golfonline.com/
Golf magazine has created a useful Web site that goes beyond the regular print version. It's got up-to-tee-off news, the latest weather report so you don't get hit by lightening, a database of the top golf instructors, the rules (in case you forgot), a database of courses and resorts, and a bulletin board on golfy topics. My favorite feature is the Personal Profiler. Fill out a form and the computer gives you a detailed plan on how you can improve your game. It told me to wait for the monkey to swing all the way over before teeing off at the mini-golf course. *–MP*

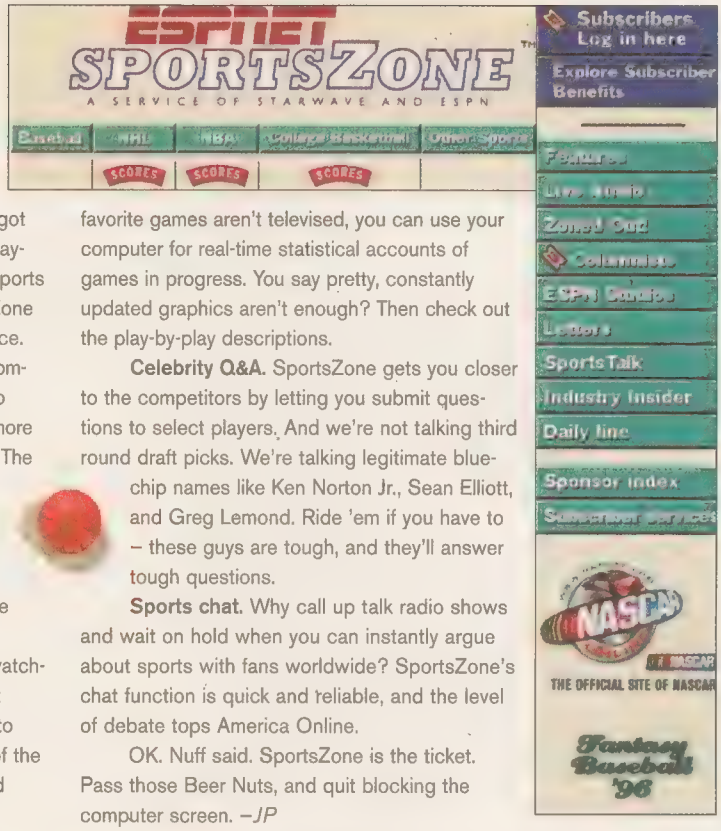
net rating: *overall:* **A**

NFL Players
http://www.nflplayers.com
The NFL Players' site would be worth a look if you have a hankering for some player stats or have a player trivia bug. Type a name, team, or whatever into the massive NFL player database, press the button, and voilá! An Instant Electronic Football card appears, only without the

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in nutrients	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing	Smart
Needs more juice	A dog	Needs a brain

ESPNet

http://espnet.sportszone.com/



net SITE OF THE MONTH MAY 1996

What do you want? Highlight films? Boom. It's got highlight films. Play-by-play? Boom. It's got play-by-play. Player interviews? Stats and box scores? Sports talk? That's right. Boom. You betcha. ESPNET SportsZone has it all – on your computer, right there, and in your face.

Bet your Bulls' tickets on it. SportsZone offers the best, most comprehensive multimedia sports coverage on the Web today. From video clips to sound files to link after logically placed link, you won't find a more gigantic resource of up-to-the-minute professional sports information. The array and timeliness of the content sets a benchmark to which other news organizations should aspire. Indeed, in one form or another, SportsZone offers all one may find on ESPN's cable TV network.

The site is rife with impressive, innovative features. In no particular order:

Video clips of amazing plays. You're watching the 5 p.m. news and see Shaq hit the first three-pointer of his career. You book on over to SportsZone, and – *yes* – it's the Video Play of the Day. Download the QuickTime or AVI clip, and you've saved Shaqidocious for posterity.

Game flow graphics. At this point, SportsZone begins to compete with TV. If your favorite games aren't televised, you can use your computer for real-time statistical accounts of games in progress. You say pretty, constantly updated graphics aren't enough? Then check out the play-by-play descriptions.

Celebrity Q&A. SportsZone gets you closer to the competitors by letting you submit questions to select players. And we're not talking third round draft picks. We're talking legitimate blue-chip names like Ken Norton Jr., Sean Elliott, and Greg Lemond. Ride 'em if you have to – these guys are tough, and they'll answer tough questions.

Sports chat. Why call up talk radio shows and wait on hold when you can instantly argue about sports with fans worldwide? SportsZone's chat function is quick and reliable, and the level of debate tops America Online.

OK. Nuff said. SportsZone is the ticket. Pass those Beer Nuts, and quit blocking the computer screen. *–JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Icons of football players adorn this stat- and trivia-heavy site.

picture (maybe they'll add that?). The Fan Club contains a Profile of the Week, and in the Trivia Quiz area, you're given $500 to gamble on your NFL player knowledge. Too bad it's just pretend money, since I just kept backing up the browser until I got all the questions right. All in all, a fair visit. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

On Hoops
http://www.onhoops.com/

On Hoops isn't just a collection of basketball scores and statistics; it's also an assortment of well-written commentary. Unafraid to express opinions, these guys bat around the league, the players, and even the announcers with impunity. They cover all the major events, with reviews on games, industry insider tidbits, and critical analysis of the state of basketball itself. These guys live, breathe ,and eat basketballs. Any fan looking for some cutting-edge coverage will find it here. *–MP*

Not affiliated with the NBA, this site is all about loving basketball.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Rugby World Server
http://www.libertynet.org/~djrugby/brfc.html

Considered to be one of the roughest sports around, rugby has a safe and easy site that lets you learn more about the game and its players. The Rugby World Server pays tribute to the sport with an extensive Web directory of pages, a coach search, USARFU and MARFU news, rugby suppliers and publications, and more. Meet the Brandywine Rugby Football Club, or find out how to join the Middle Atlantic Rugby Football Union. Some of the sections are still under heavy construction, so watch out for missing links and sparse content. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Scottie Pippens Home Court
http://www.clark.net/pub/cardman/pippen/

If you're a Scottie Pippen fan, you'll want to check out this electronic homage to a basketball star. This site has got photos of Scottie, up-to-the minute statistics on Scottie, highlights from Scottie's last four games, a section detailing all the MVP awards he's won, and some Bulls' games highlights. My favorite part is the collection of Scottie's thought-provoking quotes, which bare his naked, tortured soul to the world. The site looks good, works pretty well, and makes me wish I were seven feet tall. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

SoccerNews Online
http://www.csn.net/~eid/soccer/sccrindx.html

What's white and black and kicked all over the globe? A soccer ball! On SoccerNews Online, fans can read who's kicking the ball all the way to the CONCACAF Gold Cup, or learn which team will wow the world at the 1996 Summer Olympics. SoccerNews Online divides the reports by associations such as FIFA, CONMEBOL, UEFA, CAF, AFC, and OFC. Go to the USA section to see which college team is ranked highest in the league, or follow the links to select sites each representing youth, amateur, and professional teams. SoccerNews Online has reached its goal as a valuable sports resource. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Tennis Country
http://www.tenniscountry.com/

Tennis Country is set up like a country club at which you can't play tennis. Go to the site to gossip about tennis in the chat area, check out the latest news, follow tournament coverage, and discover playing and fitness tips to keep you competitive. A section for the kids has its own chat area and some college court coverage, and a partner matching service helps you find a tennis date. I personally expect to meet a delicious tennis babe because I said I was a 7.0 rated pro. The only problem is that the look and feel of the place made it resemble the town courts more than an exclusive club, but that shouldn't deter you. There's some solid information here. *–MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Martial-Arts as Kent's Learned Them
http://student-www.uchicago.edu/users/fun5/martial.html

Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan now have a Web site even *they* would bow down to honor. The Martial-Arts as Kent's Learned Them site has information on Martial Arts in General/Self-Defense, Tang Soo Do, Aikido, Qigong, Jeet Kune Do, and a Martial Arts Doublespeak Guide. Read the hypertext version of *The Art Of War* by Sun Tzu, or shop for equipment on the WWW Martial Arts Supply Catalog. Get advice on how to find a real Jeet Kune Do instructor. This is a stellar site for anyone interested in Kung Foo fighting. *–BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Tour DuPont
http://www.lubricants.dupont.com/Tour95/Tour95.html

The Tour DuPont is a big bike race sponsored by the manufacturers of a lubricant. Access schedules, course maps, details

of the teams and riders, and more info about lubricants than you can ever hope to use from this site. The coolest feature is the Predict the Winner option. First, they explain a bunch of physical stats, like lactate threshold (which has nothing to do with milk), then you compare the stats of the competitors to choose a winner. Only it doesn't work. Probably this is because I reviewed the '95 page (the '96 one wasn't up yet), and it wouldn't be very challenging to predict something that happened a year ago. *–MP*

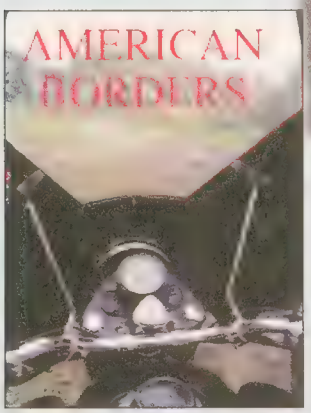
net rating: *overall:* **B**

travel

Alaska's Kenai Peninsula Resources
http://www.ptialaska.net/~kenaipen/
A man sits in a small room in Alaska. Having heard the Web is where it's at, and possessing a little techno-smartness, he decides the way to make his Alaskan fortune is to start a local business directory, and charge business $15 a month to be listed. Three months later, few businesses have signed up, and, in desperation, he pleads with them on his Web site, even trying to enlist the community for help. All to no avail. The Web has just not caught on with businesses in southern Alaska. So he sits at his computer, hoping the phone will ring. I hope it will, too. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

American Borders
http://www.gnn.com/gnn/meta/travel/features/borders/index.html
Travelogues are like voyages themselves: they can be brilliant, witty adventures into unknown places or they can be hell, and the difference is often made by the quality of your traveling companions. I'm pleased to report that Carla King, author of GNN's serial "American Borders," has created a distinct travelogue of North America, as original as it is well-written. Making her way around the continent on a Russian motorcycle, she reflects on the foreignness of our country and writes up a storm. Lots of photos spice up the tales, but there are virtually no links, even within the text itself. *–TG*



Biker chick Carla King traveled the roads of North America on this bike.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

ANZA Travel
http://www.axionet.com/gday/
I'm a sucker for unusual travel. That's why I like places like ANZA: Instead of the silly and overdone tedium of Dickens' London and New York Theater tours, they offer The Vintage Car Club of New Zealand Anniversary Tour and The Soccer Holiday of a Lifetime. You won't find those at your travel agent's! The tone of the writing is relaxed, in the budget travel style, but note: These trips ain't cheap. Still, visiting the site makes me feel that Oceania is accessible – even if I can't afford it. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Backpacker Guide
http://www.irelands-web.ie/tourism/bpguide/bpguide.htm
The Backpacker Guide is not about to replace the traditional travel guide, but if you're planning to travel through Great

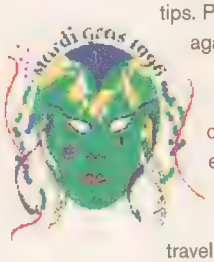
Find details maps of Great Britain, New Zealand, and Australia to guide your backpacking adventures.

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing , not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

The Travel Channel

http://www.travelchannel.com

Whether you travel like Paul Bowles or Lady Di, the travel Channel Online is certain to satiate your needs. To begin, the site, an extension of the cable TV channel, is a pleasure to look at. Sweep through organized, clean pages with beautiful pictures (that are easy on the bandwidth), or rest a while in one of the site's many flavorful sections. The Travel Channel has it all – vacation ideas and recommendations, online chat forums, photo galleries, hot topics, and, of course, links to other esteemed travel-related sites.



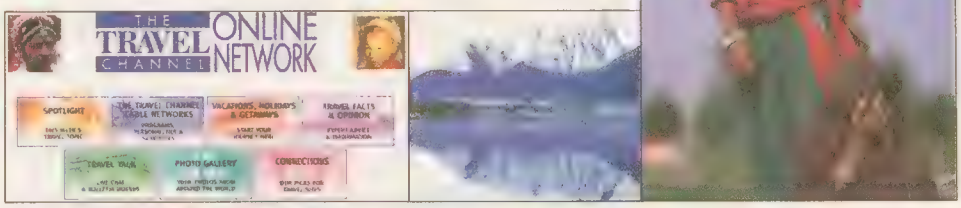
I checked the site at the peak of Mardi Gras, and the special focus on the New Orleans festival ranked as an exceptional treat. First, the Travel Channel makes use of all the latest Netscape tricks – and it offers a choice: Frames or No Frames. As one who believes Frames are akin to the Anti-Christ, I was pleased with the option. Outstanding. And the info wrapped up in those pages could easily stand on its own as a respectable Web site. It's phat with details about Mardi Gras history, customs, recipes, and travel tips. Plenty of photos, and again, wonderful design.

The site offers *two* chat options, in case you wanna exchange woes about a bumpy cruise or get insight on your future travel plans from someone who's already been there. The first chat area is set up as a traditional bulletin board in which users post messages to a "topic board," and other users post messages to the same board to reply. It's very much like a Usenet thing. But the Travel Channel also offers a Frames-based Web chat, in real time. Very much like an IRC thing, for those who want more of an immediate dialog. (Warning: It's not terribly fast.) The posting board seemed considerably more active than the Frames chat, but again, it's always nice to have choices.

The Photo Gallery is by far the most exceptional and entertaining aspect of the site, though. Not only do we get to look at stunning photographs from around the world, broken into categories – Asia, Western Europe, Africa – but the photographs are submitted by viewers of the Travel Channel and visitors to the Web site. Tres Cool!

Overall, the travel Channel should amuse, entertain, and at times, enlighten with advice and interesting articles. It's a definite must for anyone who considers him or herself a "traveler." *–BG*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**



Britain, New Zealand, or Australia on a shoe-string budget, this site will be an indispensable supplement to it. No paper guide can give you up-to-the-minute information on your destination, and what traditional guide would give you a list of cyber-cafes where you can take time out from your travels to sate your net addiction? Several links did not function, but there are a lot of tips and facts that you would be unlikely to find elsewhere. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Boat To Bolivia
http://www.londonmall.co.uk/conway/

With a title like "Boat to Bolivia," I expected swashbuckling adventure – or, at least, adventurous writing. Sad to say, Tracy Morris is no adventurer, and her writing is about as thrilling as your cousin's slide show. She relates the story of two middle-class Brits making their way around the Americas, eventually to (you guessed it!) Bolivia. Expect a slow server and scanned postcards for graphics. The spelling and grammar are good, though. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

European Rail Travel Index
http://www.starnetinc.com/eurorail/railindx.htm

It is very sad to look at this site and reflect upon the sorry state of American railroads. If you're going to Europe, however, rail is the only way to travel, and this site will tell you everything you need to know to make your trip trouble-free. It is an amazing resource, packed full of detailed, factual information about the European rail network, Eurail passes, rates, trip planning, and much more. Particularly noteworthy is the detailed information about differences in railroads and Eurail pass coverage from country to country. Essential reading for anyone Europe-bound. *–BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Healthy Flying
http://www.maui.net/diana/

Flight discomfort is caused by more than just a fear of the plane crashing into the mountains and leaving your remains a charred, indistinguishable heap. Former flight attendant Diana Fairechild has documented why flying is uncomfortable in her book, *Jet Smart*, much of which is available in "quick tip" form via her Web page. There's a neat bit of animation on the first page, but the focus here is on the content – be sure to read about the "full utilization of air," and how pilots can change the amount of air passengers breathe. Scaaaary. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Mirage Resorts
http://www.themirage.com/

Las Vegas is a singularly American place: In a terrain where there's nothing of interest, attractions are invented and packaged. The Mirage Hotel is a perfect epitome of this, in that (fake) European food is served by a (fake) volcano while you watch (real) tigers in their (fake) environment. And it's all available for downloading! Get the Mirage experience through pictures, sound bites, and QuickTime video clips – or buy T-shirts and plush tigers via the Web site! You'll never have to leave the house. And isn't that what you want in a vacation? *–TG*

Get a glimpse of Siegfried & Roy's Royal White Tigers on the site.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Preview Vacations
http://www.vacations.com/

Boy, this site is pretty: pretty like a stuffed peacock. There are more than 500 colorful pages here, including destination information, photos, multimedia stuff, and "real-time transaction capabilities." But when you get down to the meat of things – booking vacations – you're stuck with the usual, boring, pedestrian vacation standbys. ("Would you like the $100-per-night room in Paris or London?") There are lots of clever forms, and games to noodle with as well. Fill out the survey: doing so enters you in a monthly drawing for $1,000 worth of credit toward a Preview vacation. *–TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

vanity

John's house of Weirdness
http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/1033/

Zzzzzzzzz.... John's House of Weirdness is yet another vanity page that offers nothing but an insignificantly shallow insight into the creator's life. The usual: links to his friends, significant moments in his Web-wandering life, and the annoyingly ubiquitous Douglas Adams funny-face character (whatever the hell it's called). And, of course, the pointless use of Frames. In fact, John's Thought of the Day is that "Frames are most cool!!!" They sure are, but check somebody else's site for proof of this. Well, maybe I'm being too harsh. Kudos to John for at least experimenting with HTML. After all, who am I to talk? I don't even *have* a home page. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Red's Toyland

http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~mizraith/index.html

Here at *The Net*, we don't have an easy time choosing a Site of the Month. A lot of factors have to be taken into account, and we've assembled some massive spreadsheets to handle all the data and calculations. Then again, sometimes a site has something that we just like. This is the case with Red's Toyland. We have found this Official Wicked Hair Dyeing Page not only to be well-designed, but also full of essential information for our editorial staff.

Mark "Red" Byer and his sister Evi-Lynn put together this wonderful set of instructions, so you get male and female perspectives about taking your hair from its natural blandness to new heights of colorful individualism. The instructions and advice go way beyond the quick, back-of-the-bottle blurbs printed on various color products to nuggets of hard-learned practical hints, such as "double the maximum time written on the package" that you are going to leave the dye in your hair. As for color choice, "dark blue and purples last the longest." The discussion gets a little philosophical in the paragraphs debating permanent versus non-permanent hair dyes, and some shocking secrets are revealed about so-called "permanent" hair dyes. Fourteen popular hair dye products are reviewed on this page, with the authors acting as test subjects.

It's a little spurious to honor these pages as a Site of the Month on the basis of only one thing, but wait, there's more. Red is a self-confessed LegoManiac, and we can appreciate that (just see the graphics in our April issue). Red has a whole page where he begs anybody who works for Lego to hire him to do product design. Besides that, there are links to other great Lego sites on the Web. Now, Red does mention the Renaissance Fair on his home page, and we at *The Net* are not united in our opinion about that, but the link actually went to his sister's RenFair page, so that doesn't count.

Finally, one interesting project featured on the introductory page was The Line Around The World. The goal of this association is to bring people closer together by having them put links on their Web pages to other people's pages in the society. People get two links on their pages (i.e., two points forming a line), so anyone can follow the links along this line and see many new and interesting people, or, at least, their Web pages. *–WKC*

net rating: *overall:*

Jon & Francis Berndt
http://www.hal-pc.org/~jsb/

Wow! In August, Jon and Francis visited Jon's parents in Minnesota. The weather was nice, and ooooh, the pictures! Lake Superior sure looks mighty purty with the boats floating on it. These kinds of anecdotes and snapshots give me that same warm fuzzy feeling I get when I read about

Jon and Francis come from an area southeast of Sheffield, England.

Jon and Francis' family history, also presented on this site. Once you've learned all about the Clan from Derbyshire, check out this pair's links of choice. My favorite has to be the Presentation of Purported Flaws in Evolution Theory. Well, maybe the Romance Writers' Resources is even a little bit cooler than that. A page only Jon's mother could love. Or maybe members of his church. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Karl Tiedemann
http://www-personal.umich.edu/~tiedeman/

This is easily one of the best-designed and technically superb vanity home pages to emerge from the bowels of the Web.

Ultra-cool graphics are here, but then, Karl is a graphic designer by profession.

Shockwave, Tables, VRML – Karl experiments with all of it. But then again, it's his biz. This guy runs an interactive video and graphic design company that bleeds professionalism, unlike the current crop of money-grubbing "Web Designers" who are advertising up a storm in your town. Karl also has included a bonus rant on his site about the Ann Arbor, MI chapter of the Anti-Squirrel Coalition. I don't get it either. But you still better watch out for this guy. Or hire him. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Mark Richardson World
http://www.mountain.net/hp/bluetic/

This site *looks* busy, busy, busy. But basically, like most vanity sites, it's filled with a whole lot of nothing. But at least o' Mark's been keeping up with the Web wizardry tricks of the day. MIDI sound, ticker tape at the bottom of the page, tables and other nifty gimmicks demonstrate the latest in home page painting, even if the content is questionable. But why shouldn't it be? This is Mark's world, not your domain. For example, Mark has graciously installed links to Tia, Jim, Paul, and his other pals' home pages. And I'm sure they appreciate it. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

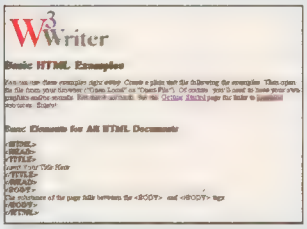
Don't Spread That Hoax
http://www.crew.umich.edu/~chymes/newusers/Think.html

Don't send me anymore "Good Times Virus" e-mails or messages about some pitiful, terminally ill kid trying to break the Guinness Book Record for receiving the most get-well cards. These net.memes, and others explained on this site, are not worth your time. They are hoaxes. Get it? Pranks! Thank Charles Hymes for devoting a page that documents this garbage, and advises us to check our info before wasting bandwidth. This site is a must-read for newbies susceptible to age-old cons and Word viruses. Now remember, the Federal Government is not going to start charging for e-mail anytime soon! O.K.? *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Gordon Hake's Basic HTML Tutorial
http://hake.com/gordon/w3-index.html

If you don't like what you see online, you better be prepared to top it. And Gordon's put together a nice home for



Sample HTML code is provided here to help you build your own Web page.

autodidactics itching to weave their own part of this Web. This site is a clear introduction to Web publishing, complete with links to other Web development resources online. Most of this tutorial is appropriated from other places, but the info is still all good and very helpful to those trying to build Web sites. You won't find tips on how to include all the latest bells and whistles here, but that's of no matter to newbies. In the end, it's not glam and glitz but clear design and clean content that's the message of this new medium. Start here. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

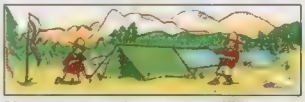
GraphComp's VRML Tools Review
http://www.graphcomp.com/vrml/review.html

As we wait for VRML to catch on, new browsers are popping up that claim to be the best for exploring 3D worlds on the Web. The VRML (Virtual Reality Mode Language) Tools Review from Graphcomp, a graphical software development company, is a clean and well-organized comparison chart of the latest VRML apps to hit the net. Snapshots of a site seen through each browser are a striking complement to the chart – and there *is* a big difference between the presentations of VR Scout and the oft-hyped WebSpace. Look here first so you don't waste your downloading dollar on below-par VRML applications. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Macintosh WWW Resources
http://www.comvista.com/net/www/WWWDirectory.html

Look here for some good, and free, info from Com Vista, a net and Web consul-



Mac users can become as efficient as scouts if they use this site.

tant company. Its WWW Resource Directory is a one-stop shop for almost everything Mac-based surfers and designers need to explore to set up shop in Cyberspace. You'll get it all, from client-side audio apps and browsers to server software and CGI tools. Some of the tools are even reviewed to help you choose your apps wisely. A good bookmark to keep handy when lurking, or decorating. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Page Generator v2.0
http://www.cs.uoregon.edu/~jolson/generator/

Instant gratification! The Page Generator gives us what we want – a home page of our own – when we want it, which of course is right now! Enter in some basic design guidelines – color of background, size of print, title of page, etc. The machine then cranks out a cookie-cutter page that can be mailed to you for placement on your server. I love it! Web pages on demand! Forget learning HTML in a week. That's for people with too much time on their hands, nerds, and those lucky enough to get paid for programming. Perhaps *now* I'll get around to creating home pages for my favorite candy bars. *–DP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

The Blue Pages' Web Site Reviewers:

BB: Brian Bearden (pepe@mail.utexas.edu) is a computer science student and astronomy staff member at the University of Texas who's trying not to be driven off the brink of madness by the hate and confusion of the world.

BG: Blue Grrrl (shel@thenet-usa.com, who's also Reviews Editor for *The Net*) is the scary monster under your bed!

BJB: Bonnie J. Burton (burtonb@ucsu.Colorado.EDU) is a geek girl who writes articles on computer culture, designs Web sites to pay rent, has more e-mail friends than real ones, and thinks Bettie Page should run for president. Her Shameless Self-Promotion Page hides at http://ucsu.Colorado.EDU/~burtonb/Home.html.

DP: David Pescovitz (pesco@well.com) is a carbon-based artificial intelligence preparing for disembodiment during the Great Millennium Freakout. It also edits Spiv's Nrrrd site (http://www.spiv.com) and spews mutant memetic spores onto the pages of *Wired* and *bOING bOING*.

KT: Kathy Tafel (ktafel@thenet-usa.com), *The Net*'s Digital Media Editor, arranges her "Babylon 5" micro-machines in alphabetical order when nobody's looking.

JP: Jon Phillips (jon@thenet-usa.com), *The Net*'s Managing Editor, is more afraid of you than are you of him.

KW: Karen Wickre (Kwickre@aol.com) has co-authored *Atlas to the World Wide Web* (Ziff-Davis Press, 1995), edited *Guide to Netscape Navigator* (ZD Press, 1996), and contributed to *Yahoo Unplugged* (IDG Books, 1995).

LG: Lauren Guzak, *The Net*'s CD-ROM editor (guzak@thenet-usa.com), plans a hostile takeover of the world once she gets her life in order.

LS: Lydia Schwartz serves as the East Coast Correspondent of *The Net*. She holds a degree in computer science and can be found on any given day jogging across the Brooklyn Bridge with her golden retriever, Doom.

MP: Matt Patterson (DrBubonic@aol.com) lives in Los Angeles and is currently paid to make screw catalogs. Read his magazine, Ooze, at http://www.io.com/~ooze.

RKR: Reed K. Rahlman (rkr@well.com) has written a number of dark comedies, which, in the best comic traditions, have some combination of blood, con artists, and two headed babies. He welcomes your comments on his reviews, but don't expect him to answer.

SS: Steve Szyszko is a sysadmin/Web master who, not surprisingly, is extremely skeptical of any promises made about the Internet. He shoots a great deal of pool, has no pets, and adores Gore Vidal. Reach him at szyszko@mail.utexas.edu.

TG: Tom Geller (TGeller@aol.com) is a San Francisco-based writer who has used online services since 1986. He has no bodily warts.

WKC: *The Net*'s Associate Editor Wayne Cunningham (wcunning@thenet-usa.com) is afflicted with the postmodern condition. He grafts areas of human endeavor together at will, and is happy practicing such modern anomalies as infotainment and imagineering.

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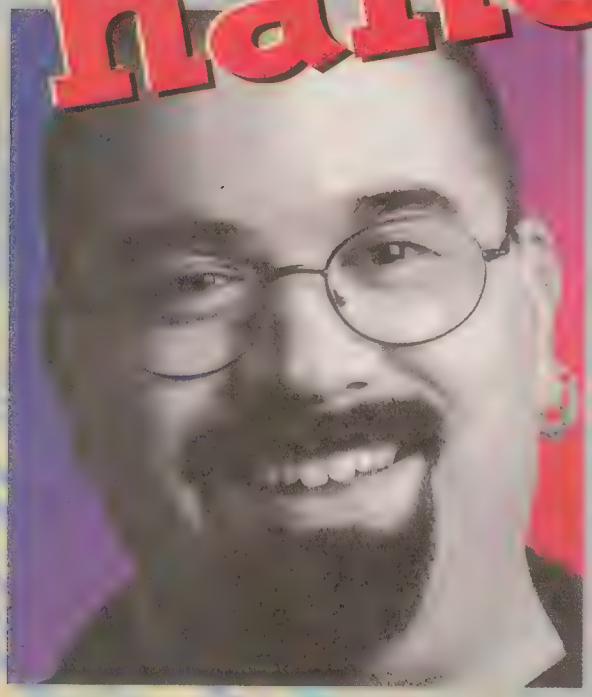

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ASCII TV: Text Based Television Resources

The Blue Pages have gotten a lot of mail requesting text-based resources – after all, not everyone can afford a suped-up multimedia computer to handle the Web. We aim to please, and will now include this special section feature each month to update our ASCII rider population on the offerings of Usenet and Mailing Lists. If you have topic suggestions for future Blue Pages, send 'em along to blue@thenet-usa.com.

90210
alt.tv.90210
Do you ever wonder how long these 30-something actors can keep up the freshman-in-college theme?

Absolutely Fabulous
alt.tv.ab-fab
Read about the alcoholic misadventures of the dynamic British duo.

Adams Family
alt.fan.addams.family
Converse about Wednesday, Lurch, and the rest of the goth bunch here.

Babylon 5
rec.arts.scifi.tv.babylon5.info
When our Web mistress is not hacking out code, she's reading this list. It's highly active.

Barney
alt.tv.barney
Ahh, banter about a 2,000-pound stuffed purple dinosaur. Fascinating!

Beavis and Butthead
alt.tv.beavis-n-butthead
Heh, heh. Butthead, eh heh heh, check out the nodes, eh heh, on that PPP.

Brady Bunch
alt.tv.brady-bunch
And the one day when the lady met this fellow... The 70s at their worst!

Fifteen
alt.tv.fifteen
Much more realistically than the "90210" team, these 20-something actors portray high school students. Heh.

Frasier
alt.tv.frasier
What do you get when you cross an anal-retentive psychotherapist and a mediocre script?

Friends
alt.tv.friends.puke.puke.puke
You'd think we would have learned by now to avoid the layered hair cut...

Game Shows
alt.tv.game-shows
Are there tricks to winning Jeopardy? Is this an art to spinning the wheel? Find out!

Jay Leno
alt.fan.jay-leno
Ever since that Microsoft deal, Jay Leno just hasn't been the same.

David Letterman
alt.fan.letterman
He's getting old, kids, but he's still alive and well on Usenet.

Kids In The Hall
alt.tv.kids-in-hall
What would happen if the chicken lady met the flying pig in Scott's bar?

Mad About You
alt.tv.mad-about-you
Romantic comedies, hmm. There must be a lot to talk about in this newsgroup.

Max Headroom
alt.tv.max-headroom
The original cyborg a la interactive TV...

Melrose Place
alt.tv.melrose-place
So, is she dead, or isn't she? And I don't think they've cleaned the pool once in three-plus years....

MST3K
alt.fan.mst3k
Too bad they had to take Joel away, and have you noticed Tom Servo's arms aren't so wiggly anymore?

Nickelodeon
alt.tv.nickelodeon
Post messages about everything from "Rugrats" to "I Love Lucy."

NYPD Blue
alt.tv.nypd-blue
Drama, intrigue, and a controversial murder every week. Catch the latest gossip on all things New York and blue.

Picket Fences
alt.tv.picket-fences
Dissect the deep sociological metaphors underlying this allegedly mainstream TV show.

Real World
alt.tv.real-world
So uh, who is this Neil guy anyway, and do you ever wonder what Puck has been up to?

Ren And Stimpy
alt.fan.ren-and-stimpy
Just in case you missed the latest sadistic adventure...

Roseanne
alt.tv.roseanne
Midwestern life at its finest. Catch the real life gossip here, too.

Rush Limbaugh
alt.fan.rush-limbaugh.tv-show
Yes, Limbaugh has quite a following online, giraffes and all.

Seinfeld
alt.tv.seinfeld
Jerry and George get in a bind, Elaine inadvertently makes it worse, and Kramer, well, you know the schtick....

Simpsons
alt.tv.simpsons
Lisa Simpson: prepubescent feminist or military intelligence spy? You be the judge.

Star Trek
alt.startrek
Of the zillions of "StarTrek" newsgroups, this is the most general.

Twilight Zone
alt.tv.twilight.zone
Discourse on the real meanings behind creepy trap doors and karma-operated lightbulbs.

X-Files
alt.tv.x-files.creative
I wish for just one episode, Mulder and Skully could *both* believe.

MAILLISTS

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Highlander
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Andy Griffith
Mail To: LISTSERV@BOLIS.SF-BAY.ORG
Type: Subscribe <your name> Mayberry

Monkees
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Star Trek
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Type: Subscribe <your name> Startrek

Babylon 5
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Type: Subscribe <your name> B5-REVIEW-L

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Type: Subscribe <your name> CATV

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The UFO TV Series
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Type: Subscribe <your name> FAB-UFO

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